

State of Community Management 2014



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Our advanced community management features like analytics, content targeting and translation, help you keep your employees around the world engaged and motivated. Plus we help you connect experts to business problems and enable innovation to be fostered as a strategic imperative for all employees to support.

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Learn more at www.sitrion.com/community

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Welcome to the State of Community Management 2014

*Welcome to the fifth edition of
The Community Roundtable's
annual State of Community
Management.*

As the discipline of community management has evolved, so too has this report...

In 2010 the report compiled and documented what TheCR Network members were learning together.

In 2011 the report consolidated and organized even more common practices, creating a reference guide for community managers to pull from.

In 2012 the report documented a different look at communities and covered the initiatives and milestones that they go through as they mature.

Last year we evolved the research to a quantitative platform about communities, community managers and community programs that delivered data about engagement rates, standardized programs and community manager characteristics.

This year we are excited by the evolution of our quantitative methodology – informed by a collaborative effort with TheCR Network members who were part of an assessment working group – to an objective set of community maturity indicators.

What this means is that we now have the capacity to assess community maturity and benchmark the performance of one or a set of communities against each other to identify strengths and opportunities to improve – and to create a community investment roadmap.

We hope this research provides both good validation for your approach and gives you an actionable tool to help drive your community forward.

Cheers –

Rachel & Jim

The Community Maturity Model

The Community Roundtable developed the Community Maturity Model (CMM) to help organizations understand, plan for and assess the performance of community and social business initiatives.

The CMM organizes the issues, associated competencies and information relevant to community management as the discipline matures and extends across an enterprise. It aligns on two axes, maturity levels and competencies.

	Start	Build	Grow	
	Stage 1 Hierarchy	Stage 2 Emergent Community	Stage 3 Community	Stage 4 Networked
Strategy	Familiarize & Listen	Participate	Build	Integrate
Leadership	Command & Control	Consensus	Collaborative	Distributed
Culture	Reactive	Contributive	Emergent	Activist
Community Management	None	Informal	Defined roles & processes	Integrated roles & processes
Content & Programming	Formal & Structured	Some user generated content	Community created content	Integrated formal & user generated
Policies & Governance	No Guidelines for UGC	Restrictive social media policies	Flexible social media policies	Inclusive
Tools	Consumer tools used by individuals	Consumer & self-service tools	Mix of consumer & enterprise tools	'Social' functionality is integrated
Metrics & Measurement	Anecdotal	Basic Activities	Activities & Content	Behaviors & Outcomes

Using the Community Maturity Model

The Community Maturity Model (CMM) can be used to understand the discipline of community management and as a tool for decision-making.

We've seen TheCR Network members apply the model to their organizations in a variety of ways including:

- **A gap analysis and roadmap tool** to justify and plan budget and associated initiatives
- **A method of tracking community by community progress** to make better decisions about resource allocation and investments
- **A framework for community management training** to ensure organizational-wide standards in approach

Last fall, a group of members in TheCR Network formed a working group with the objective of using the CMM to develop a tool for community managers to assess the maturity of their communities.

The **Community Maturity Assessment Working Group** built a set of artifacts for each stage of community maturity in the CMM. The assessment work resulted in a checklist community managers could use to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their community programs.

In addition to using these artifacts to develop the State of Community Management 2014 survey, working group members have applied and expanded on their work in their own organizations.

This research is the culmination of our collaboration with this group, and we are grateful for their rich practitioner input.

Using the Community Maturity Model at Johnson Controls

Using the Community Maturity Model to Build a Community Roadmap

At Johnson Controls, we've used the Community Maturity Model as a framework to help grow an external community for customers, partners and prospective customers. We designed a roadmap that outlines how specific initiatives will help the community mature. The model helped us:

1. Identify short-term and long-term strategic goals.
2. Track and measure progress - against ourselves and communities surveyed in the State of Community Management 2014.
3. Communicate initiatives and budgetary needs (immediate and future) for growth and success of the community.



Heather Ausmus, Johnson Controls
Member of TheCR Network since 2012



Johnson Controls Community Roadmap

	FY14 Emergent Community	FY15	FY16 Community
Strategy	Define community strategy.		Integrated with business strategy.
Leadership		Pilot for community advocates.	Formal community advocate program.
Culture	Member activity mostly content consumption.		Regular participation most members.
Community Management			Three people devote full time to CM role.
Content & Programming	Ad hoc community content programming.	Regular programming. Integrated editorial calendar.	Content/calendar/schedule/strategy.

Using the Community Maturity Model at Microsoft

Using the Community Maturity Model for Internal Community Consulting

At Microsoft, many teams are committed to fostering and revitalizing communities. The Community Maturity Model helps us develop action plans for these communities. We've used the Community Maturity Model to:

1. Show community owners that the work of managing communities can be systematized (to a degree).
2. Guide community managers as they assess their communities against industry norms and identify the actions they want to take to improve community performance.
3. Advise sponsors of potential new communities of the initial actions they should take as they launch their communities in an 8-Step Internal Community Jumpstart plan.

Microsoft's Community Maturity Assessment Tool

Community Maturity Assessment			
Enter an X from the drop-down in the appropriate maturity level for each subcategory			
Strategy	Level 1	Level 2	
Community Strategy	Community goals identified	Community strategy progressing towards approval	
Executive Sponsorship	No executive awareness	Executive awareness but no official sponsorship	
Tactics	No community tactics being used	Community tactics being implemented	
Business Alignment	Community strategy unconnected to business goals	Community strategy is aligned with business goals	
Strategy Maturity			



Alex Blanton, Microsoft
Member of TheCR Network since 2013

About the State of Community Management 2014

The State of Community Management is The Community Roundtable's annual assessment on the performance of communities and community management.

This year's research assesses the maturity of online business communities based on the competencies in the Community Maturity Model.

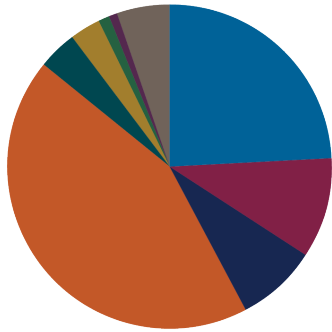
Research themes

- ✓ **How are communities performing?**
- ✓ **What are the standards and strengths of communities?**
- ✓ **What opportunities should community managers focus on to grow their programs?**

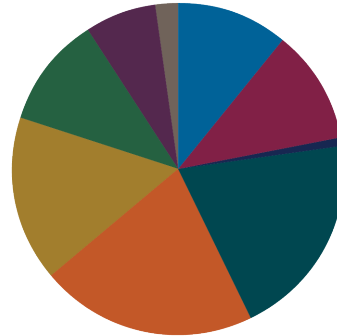


Participant Demographics

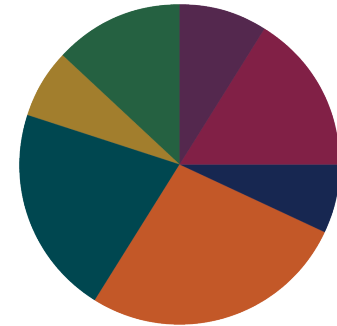
The State of Community Management 2014 surveyed 164 communities across industry, use case, size and age. The average community age was 4.8 years and 43% of survey respondents represent communities from TheCR Network member organizations.



- Business, legal and professional services
- Financial services
- High tech/telecom/software
- Manufacturing
- Health care or social services
- Public administration
- Transportation
- Retail
- Other



- External: Marketing
- External: Product innovation
- External: Customer support
- External: Community of practice
- Internal: Collaboration
- Internal: Community of practice
- Internal: Community of interest
- Internal: Knowledge management
- Other



- 0-499
- 500-999
- 1,000-9,999
- 10,000-49,999
- 50,000-99,999
- 100,000-999,999
- 1,000,000 or more



Industries

The most widely represented industries were: high tech/telecom/software and business/legal/professional services.



Use cases

36% of survey respondents manage internal communities and 53% manage external communities.



Community Size

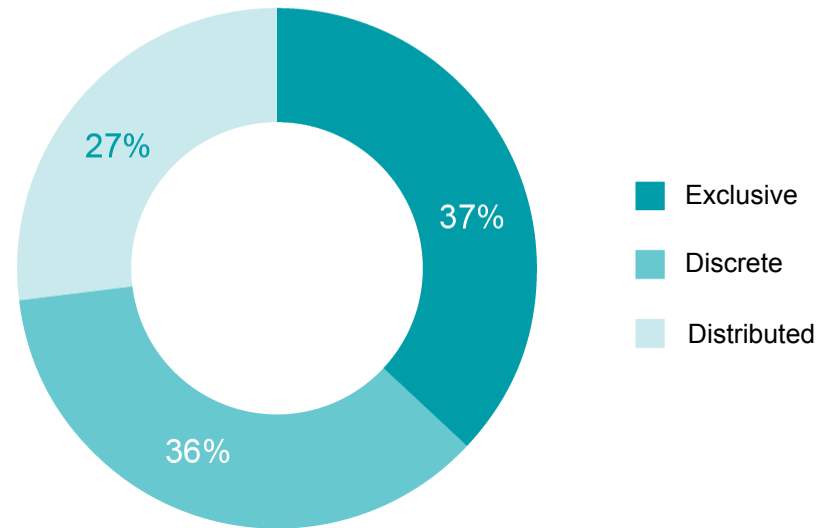
50 percent of communities had 10,000 or more members.

The Evolution of Communities

As the Internet and the social web has evolved, so too have online communities. We categorize communities in three ways:

- **Exclusive** - The community has qualifications to entry, a "home base" online and membership is explicit. Members would identify themselves as members of the community.
- **Discrete** - The community has a "home base" online, but membership is implicit and based on participation. Members may not identify themselves as members per se, even though they have an account.
- **Distributed** - The community interacts in various places online, and membership is vague. Members don't think of themselves as members of your community so much as individuals who interact with you on social channels.

The survey population represented a relatively equal distribution of each type of online community.



Listen to Nancy White, Rachel Happe and Jim Storer discuss the evolution of online communities.

Key Findings

Key Findings

1

Community maturity delivers business value.

For many years, community management has been more of an art than a science. That is changing as organizations apply more process. Those that do apply more process are seeing results – and newer communities are in many cases more mature than those started 3-4 years ago because they are able to make use of emerging knowledge of community practices.

Of those with the most mature processes – the best-in-class (the top 20%) in this report, 85% can measure the value of their communities vs. 48% for the average community.

2

Advocacy programs increase engagement.

Community advocacy and leadership programs are a key element of the most successful communities – they correlate with engagement, ability to measure value and executive participation. These programs require an investment in community management resources and processes to scale from informal programs to structured programs to multi-tiered leadership initiatives.

Only 33% of communities without any leadership opportunities are able to measure value – that rate more than doubles to 71% for those with formal advocacy programs.

3

Executive participation impacts success.

Executive support is obviously needed to drive business results, and while executive participation correlates with resources to enable success, it also is strongly linked to community engagement. This validates the need for both sponsorship and behavior modeling on the part of executives.

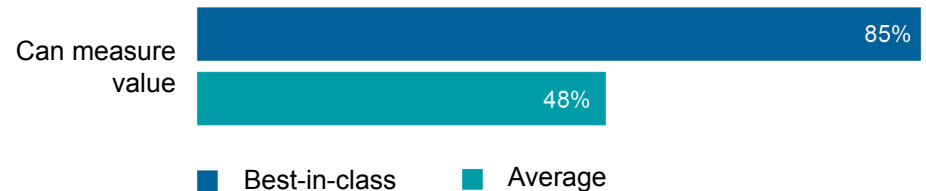
In best-in-class communities, 58% include CEO participation vs. average CEO participation rates of 36% - those are the same communities that are most likely to be able to measure value, have a fully-funded roadmap and have advanced community leadership programs.

1. Community maturity delivers business value.

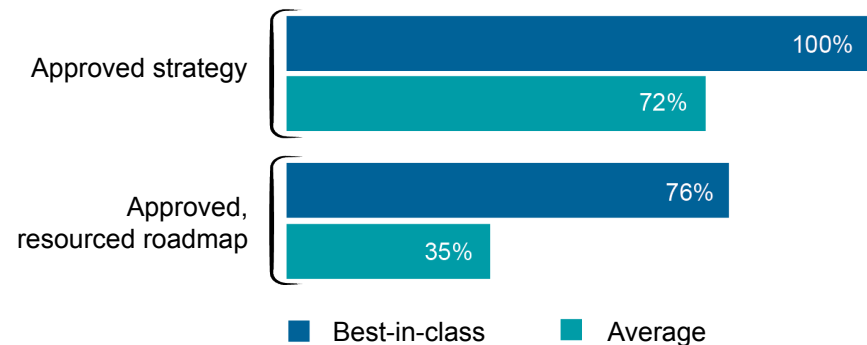
Two things were compelling and significantly different about the most mature (best-in-class) communities – they were almost twice as likely to be able to measure their business value, and they were significantly more likely to match their strategy with a fully resourced roadmap in order to execute on their ambitions.

How value is calculated varies across community use cases, an organization's ability to gather data and the way an organization structures its budgets, and because of this it was not addressed in this research. However, demonstrating that investing in community management maturity does result in an ability to measure value is an important indicator for stakeholders, who often still see investing in community management as a leap of faith. Equally important is the ability to demonstrate that the path to realizing value requires both an approved strategy and investment in a plan to execute on that strategy.

Mature communities are almost twice as likely to be able to measure value...



... and more than twice as likely to have fully resourced roadmaps.

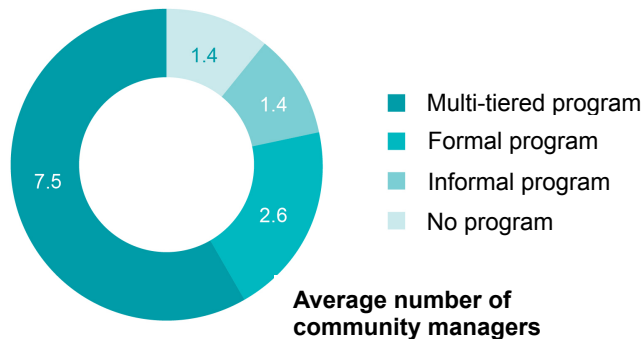


2. Advocacy programs increase engagement.

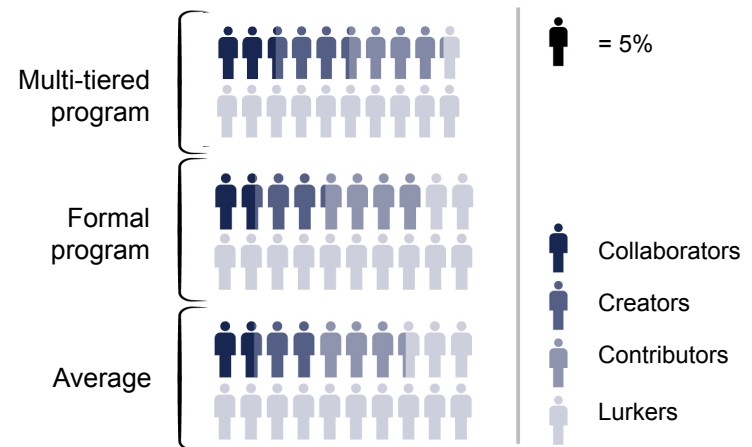
Community advocacy and leadership programs can have a significant impact on engagement rates. Those with multi-tiered programs see some of the highest engagement rates, with 46% of members contributing in some capacity and a significantly higher percent of community members collaborating with each other to create value.

These programs, however, require more community management resources and are more common in older communities. For those that understand their impact, that investment pays off.

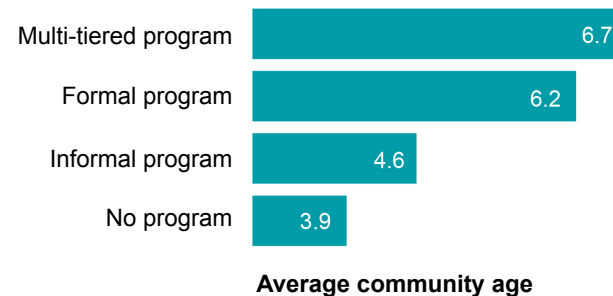
...but higher engagement rates require more community managers...



Multi-tiered community leadership programs have some of the best community engagements rates...



...and are typically found in older communities.



3. Executive participation impacts success.

While it is not surprising that communities with CXO participation are more likely to have a fully funded community roadmap, it was surprising how much executive participation increased general engagement, particularly when the CIO participated.

This data suggests the critical role executives play in both supporting the community and in modeling behavior.

Not surprisingly, communities with executive participation are more likely to have a fully funded roadmap...

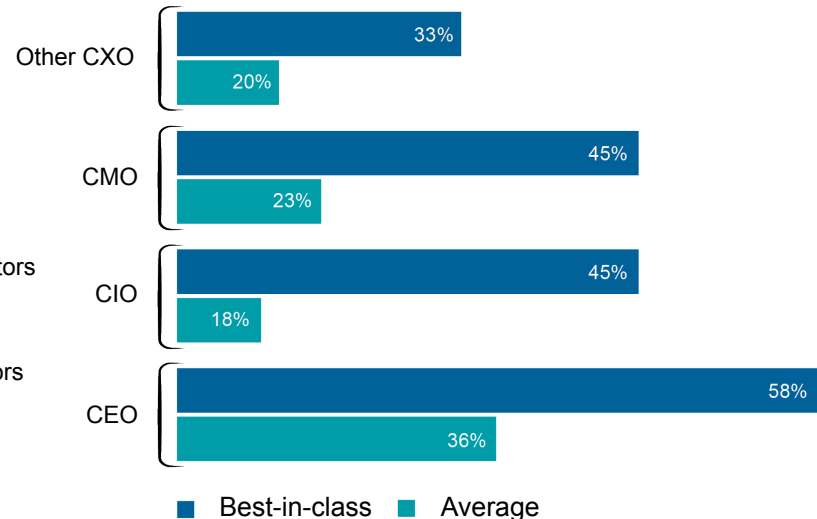


Communities with approved, resourced roadmaps

...but executive participation also significantly impacts general engagement rates...



...and best-in-class communities have higher executive engagement rates.



Comparison Perspectives

Comparison Perspectives

Best-in-class communities demonstrate potential.

Throughout this research, we label the most mature 20% of communities as “best-in-class.” We use this data to offer a comparison perspective to demonstrate what top performers are achieving.

The best-in-class segment is consistent across metrics and may not be achieving the best performance in any one metric. Instead this data demonstrates how the best overall performers are prioritizing their focus relative to average – helping us all understand the potential for communities.

Community managers matter.

Despite progress in understanding the discipline of community management over the years, far too many communities are still without any dedicated community management resources.

However, the truth is, community managers matter – they impact the engagement, ability to measure value and the maturity of the community.

For anyone hoping to get business value from a community, appropriately resourcing community management staff should be a priority.

Internal and external communities are similar... but different.

Internal – or employee focused – communities are a relatively new use case for online communities, and it is easy to see how they are different than external, customer and market facing communities.

We have found a surprising degree of similarity, however, particularly in their community management approach and ability to measure value.

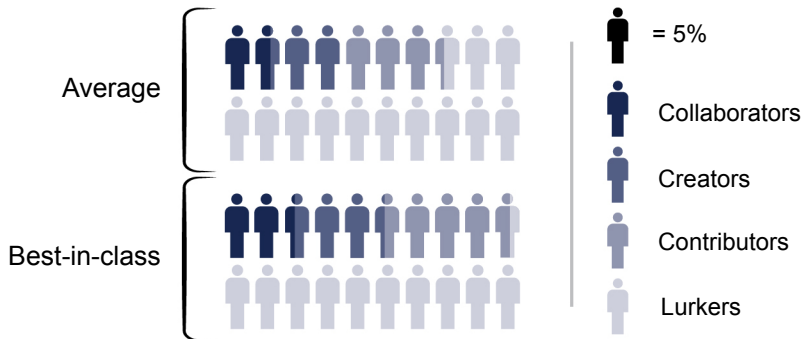
The differences show up in the topics and the complexity of goals they have and is demonstrated by differences in engagement patterns and the number of community managers required.

Best-in-class communities demonstrate potential.

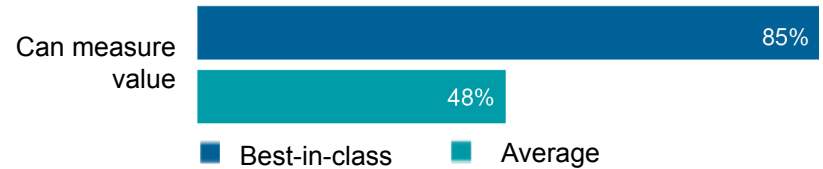
Members of best-in-class communities are significantly more engaged, and these communities are almost twice as likely to be able to measure value than the survey average. They also are more likely to have advanced community leadership programs.

This segment of communities can be used to establish community management goals and garner support for investing in community management resources and programs.

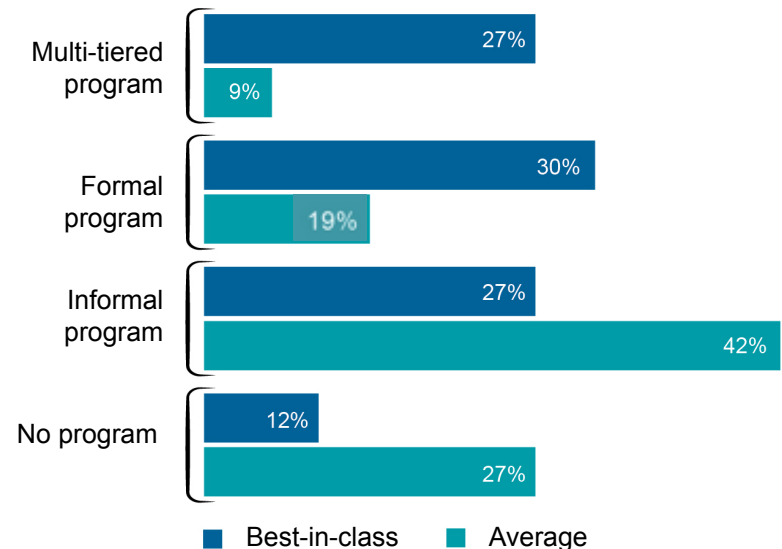
Best-in-class communities are significantly more engaged.



Best-in-class communities are almost twice as likely to know their value.



High levels of formal and multi-tiered leadership programs deliver engagement and value.



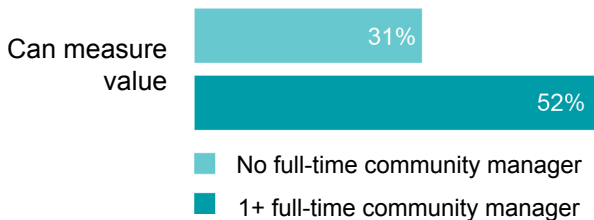
Community managers matter.

Dedicated community managers make a huge difference in engagement, maturity and ability to measure value. Best-in-class communities understand this and have over twice the average number of community managers.

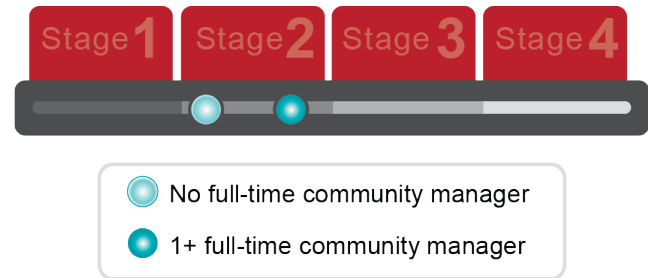
Best-in-class communities have more than twice the number of community managers as average.



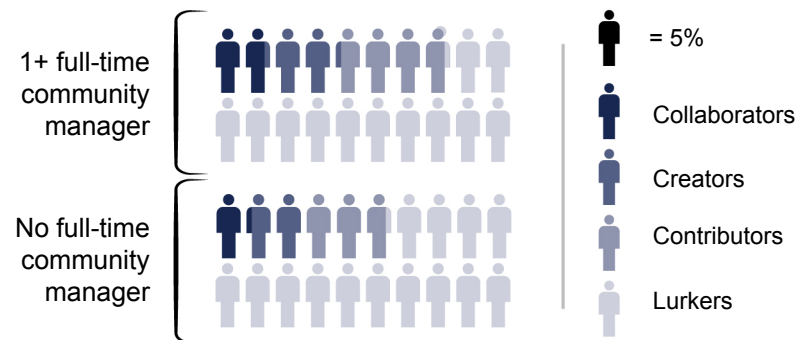
Communities with dedicated community managers almost twice as likely to be able to measure value



Dedicated community managers correlate to higher community maturity.



Dedicated community management improves engagement rates.



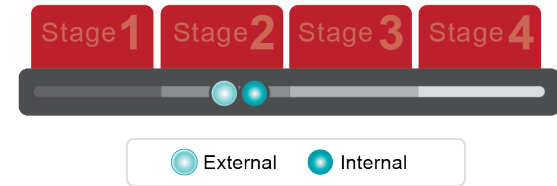
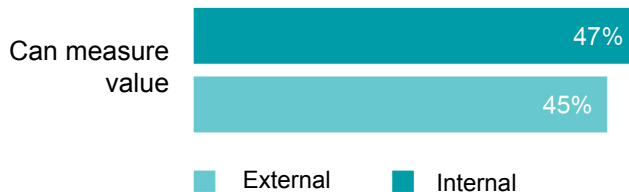
Internal and external communities are similar... but different.

Internal and external communities were surprisingly similar in their management maturity and their ability to measure value because internal communities are a relatively new use case compared to external support or market facing communities.

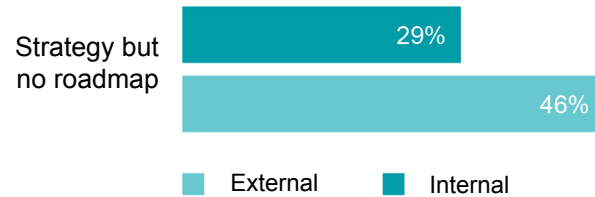
Differences showed up in ability to execute on their vision, engagement rates and number of community managers – reflecting the higher complexity of goals and interactions typical in internal communities.

	Internal	External
Average Community Managers:	2.4	1.8
Average Part-time Community Managers:	9.0	2.5

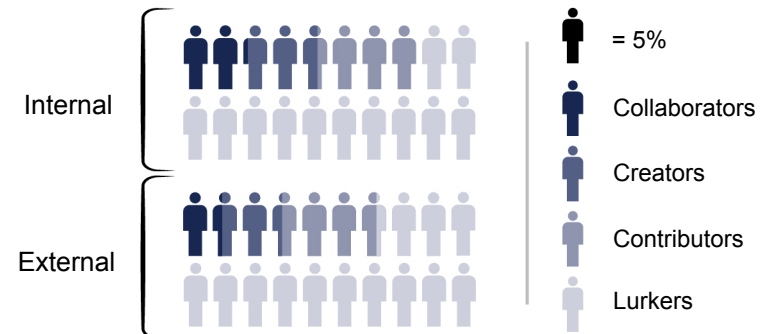
Internal and external communities are almost equally able to measure value.



While overall maturity is very similar, external communities have a bigger gap between ambition (strategy) and execution (roadmap).



Engagement rates in internal communities are higher than in external communities – but not by as much as expected



Assessment by Competency

Learning from the Community Maturity Model

This section of the report explores the eight competencies of the Community Maturity Model and includes:

- The definition of each competency
- How communities are performing
- Recommendations for maturing each competency in your community
- Answers to frequently asked questions about community, based on this research and TheCR's work with over 95 organizations
- Lessons from TheCR Network's weekly Roundtable programming

About TheCR Network's Roundtable Programming

TheCR Network members have access to weekly Roundtable programming, calls facilitated by experts and practitioners on topics designed to help members strengthen their community programs and professional development.

The **Lessons from TheCR Network** included here are excerpts from Roundtable Reports, summaries of these events available to members in TheCR Network. This research highlights eight of the over 200 reports in the directory.

To learn more about TheCR Network, see page 73.



Strategy



Strategy

The Strategy competency measures how community objectives are created, defined and translated into plans.

The foundation of a successful community is a well-defined strategy that integrates social tools and methods with business goals and processes. A community strategy also aligns an organization's goals with member needs.

Community strategies are maturing.

72% of communities have an approved community strategy, signaling organizations understand how to justify a community approach. However, of that 72%, only 40% of those strategies are operational and measurable. In best-in-class communities, 100% have an approved strategy and 79% have strategies that are operational and measurable – an indicator of why best-in-class communities are twice as likely to be able to measure value.

A disconnect remains between strategy and execution.

Fewer than 50% of communities with an approved strategy have an approved and resourced roadmap, suggesting a significant gap between community ambition and the ability to execute on it. This gap in understanding what is required to fully realize a community strategy is a barrier to community success. Best-in-class communities have a smaller gap between those with an approved strategy and those with a fully resourced roadmap – only about 25% of those with an approved strategy lack a roadmap.

Community managers close the gap between strategy and execution.

Communities with dedicated full-time community management resources are more likely to have approved community strategies and roadmaps. While communities with full-time community managers are only slightly more likely to have approved strategies, they increase the likelihood of having a fully resourced roadmap, suggesting that community managers play a key role in translating community visions to reality.



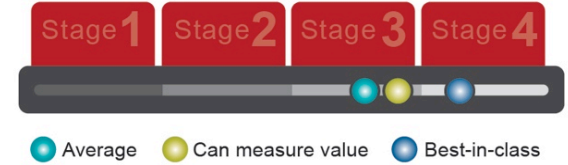
Recommendations

Assess your community strategy to ensure it is actionable and measurable.

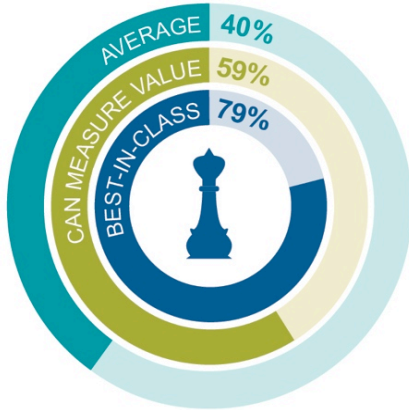
Develop a community roadmap that addresses key gaps and opportunities.

Ensure appropriate levels of community management staffing.

Strategy



Community strategy is maturing...



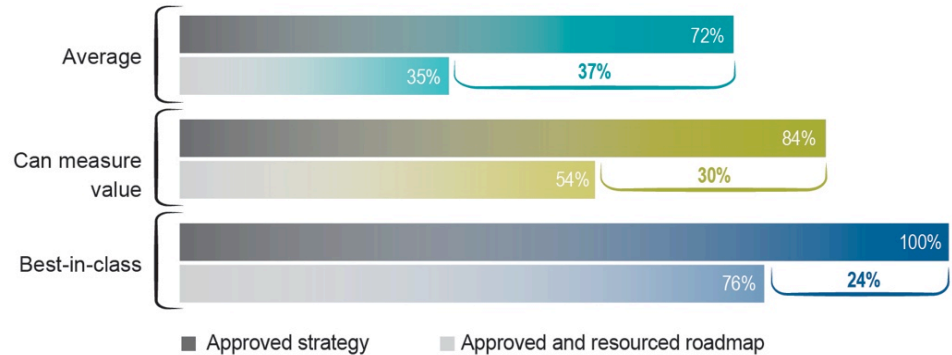
Communities with approved, operational and measurable strategies

Community managers play a key role in helping organizations develop funded community roadmaps – and close the gap between vision and action.

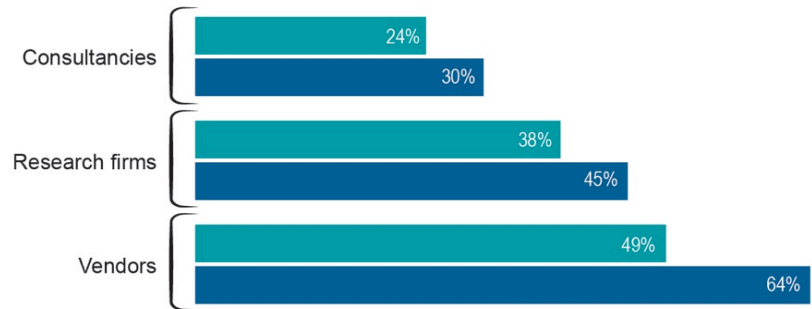


Communities with approved, resourced roadmaps

...yet for most communities a big gap remains between approved strategies and funded roadmaps.



Additionally, best-in-class communities are more likely to seek out external strategic guidance.



Most used sources: Altimeter, Forrester, Gartner, The Community Roundtable, Jive & Salesforce.com



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

To be successful, I need to convince our executives to invest in our community program – what's the best way to make headway?

How to use this research:

1. Define what success looks like.

The best way to help people see your vision is to define what success looks like. Use this research to help define which initiatives you think your community program will need to be successful.

2. Audit community management capabilities.

Use this research to compare your management capabilities against the market average and best-in-class data to demonstrate to executives where your program strengths are, where opportunities lie and why those opportunities will impact performance. See page 67 for an example of how to document this audit.

3. Build a roadmap.

Use your audit to build out a community roadmap that links specific activities and initiatives to the opportunities you have identified. Use this roadmap as a discussion tool during budget and planning discussions. It can help move the conversation of 'why should we invest' to 'what should we invest in', which is a powerful change that enables you to make progress.

FACT: *54% of communities that can measure value and 76% of best-in-class communities have a resourced roadmap.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Budgeting for Social Media and Community

These lessons are from a Roundtable call where members of TheCR Network gathered to discuss how they thought about and constructed their budgets – and what assumptions they used to estimate costs.

Lessons learned include:

- 1. Resources, technology and content management** were the line items within the budget receiving particular prominence in terms of budgeted dollars.
- 2. Survey membership (particularly superusers) to understand where to allocate budgeted dollars.** This best practice is heightened in effectiveness if followed-up with phone calls to the respondents.
- 3. If given an extra 10-15% in their budgets, participants responded that they would spend additional budget on people** (community members and/or staff). A couple participants added that they would spend it on travel as face-to-face meetings are more effective than video conferencing in certain situations.



Leadership



Leadership

The Leadership competency measures how both emergent leaders (community advocates) and formal leaders (executives) influence community performance.

Leadership roles within a community include roles members assume and how an organization's executives participate. These two components of the leadership competency are often distinct, but can overlap.

Advocacy programs increase community engagement.

Community advocacy and leadership programs are a maturity artifact that has one of the most significant positive correlations with community engagement in this research—lurker rates for communities with multi-tiered leadership programs were 54%, compared to the survey average at 63%.

Community advocacy and leadership programs correlate to overall community maturity, the number of full-time community managers, the ability to measure value, higher levels of executive participation, higher levels of product team and subject matter participation, more user-generated content, higher levels of conversation vs. content sharing and more robust community tools.

Executive participation impacts community success.

C-level participation (Note: we measured participation rates vs. sponsorship) correlates with higher rates of fully-funded roadmaps, more community managers and more mature community programming, and it also has a significant impact on overall community engagement.

In 58% of communities surveyed, community managers are responsible for coaching executives on how to engage in the community. In best-in-class communities, 85% of community managers coach executives. Getting executives comfortable participating in community is a critical success factor in best-in-class communities.



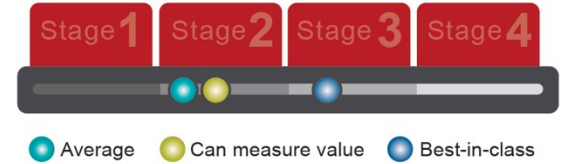
Recommendations

Invest in your community advocacy program early on.

Develop an executive coaching plan.



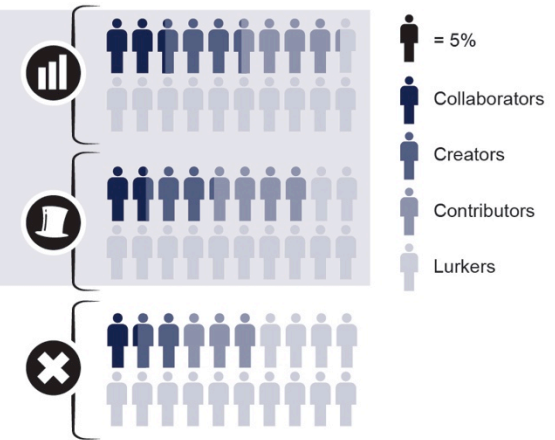
Leadership



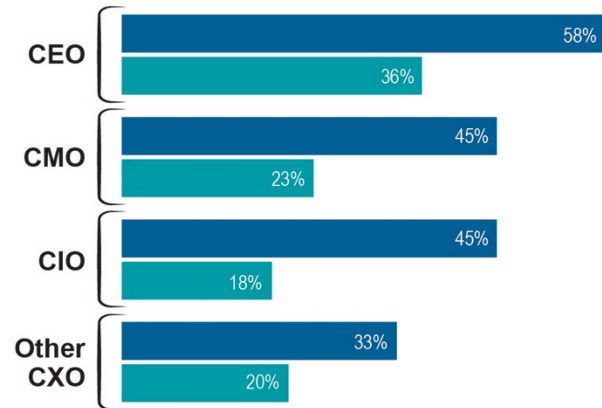
Formal community advocacy and leadership programs are more common in best-in-class communities...



...and positively impact member engagement.



Executive engagement rates are significantly stronger in best-in-class communities...



...and community managers can encourage their participation. 58% of community managers coach executives. In best-in-class communities, 85% of community managers coach executives.



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

My executive sponsor approved the community budget and is very supportive, but does not participate herself. Is it worth coaching her on how to engage?

How to use this research:

1. Understand the connection between executive participation and community success.

Communities with C-level participation have higher member engagement rates, suggesting the importance of establishing credibility and modeling behavior in the community. Executives also are more likely to participate when other executives participate. Don't limit coaching to just one executive – develop a roadmap to coach them all over time.

2. Interview executives.

Spend time understanding the executives you are targeting for participation. Knowing what and who they care about will help you understand the best opportunities to demonstrate why they should participate in the community themselves.

3. Pique executive interest!

Use community content and programming that generates artifacts that may pique executive curiosity. Communities with C-level participation are more likely to use the following types of content and programming: newsletters, regular surveys, online events and offline events.

FACT: *85% of community managers in best-in-class communities coach executives.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Case Study: The Evolution of an Advocacy Program

On this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members joined Erica Kuhl and Matt Brown from Salesforce to discuss a case study of Salesforce's MVP program.

Lessons learned include:

- 1. When building a community advocacy or leadership program, avoid over-governing the program with too many policies at the beginning.** In this case, Salesforce wanted to grow the program with their MVPs. As they started to grow and enlist new MVPs, they added policies, guidelines and expectations in tandem with the growth.
- 2. Understand from the onset of the program the plan to leverage your advocates.** This is critical in order to guard against the advocates feeling used or abused. It also contributes to a successful transition from an informal to a formalized program.
- 3. Ensure the organization elicits the feedback of the top advocates in the creation of the program.** If this group likes the program and has an opportunity to refine it, it will be accepted by the greater population of advocates.



Facilitators: Matt Brown and Erica Kuhl, Salesforce



Culture



Culture

The culture competency articulates the norms of a community and explores their impact on participation and engagement.

Culture is complex, variable and hard to describe. It can be interpreted differently by different people, has no clear right or wrong standards and changes slowly. The best communities proactively define and manage culture.

Mature communities assign management ownership to community culture.

While the majority (76%) of communities have a proactive position on the culture they want, best-in-class communities are more likely to assign ownership to culture – making responsibility for community culture clear. Community managers often play this role - 75% are responsible for promoting, encouraging and rewarding productive behaviors.

Extending management responsibilities is one way to promote a culture of active participation.

Community engagement levels are linked to community leadership opportunities. Communities with multi-tiered leadership programs have one of the strongest engagement profiles, with 12% of members actively collaborating and only 54% of members who lurk. Other member responsibilities linked to high engagement rates are contributing to strategy, building the community roadmap, researching and reporting on community trends and measuring and reporting on community performance.

There are emerging cultural standards for best-in-class communities .

While the tone of engagement varies by community use case (for example, marketing communities are most humorous), there were marked differences for all communities that could measure value. Communities that could measure value were 8% chattier than those that could not measure value, 9% more proactive to issues and 10% more structured - a significant difference given the high variability in responses. This may suggest some emerging cultural standards.



Recommendations

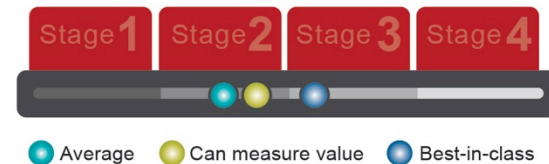
Assign ownership and responsibility for managing culture.

Extend community management responsibilities to members.

Incorporate cultural standards into your community planning.



Culture



Best-in-class communities are more proactive about managing community culture and assigning ownership to shepherd it...



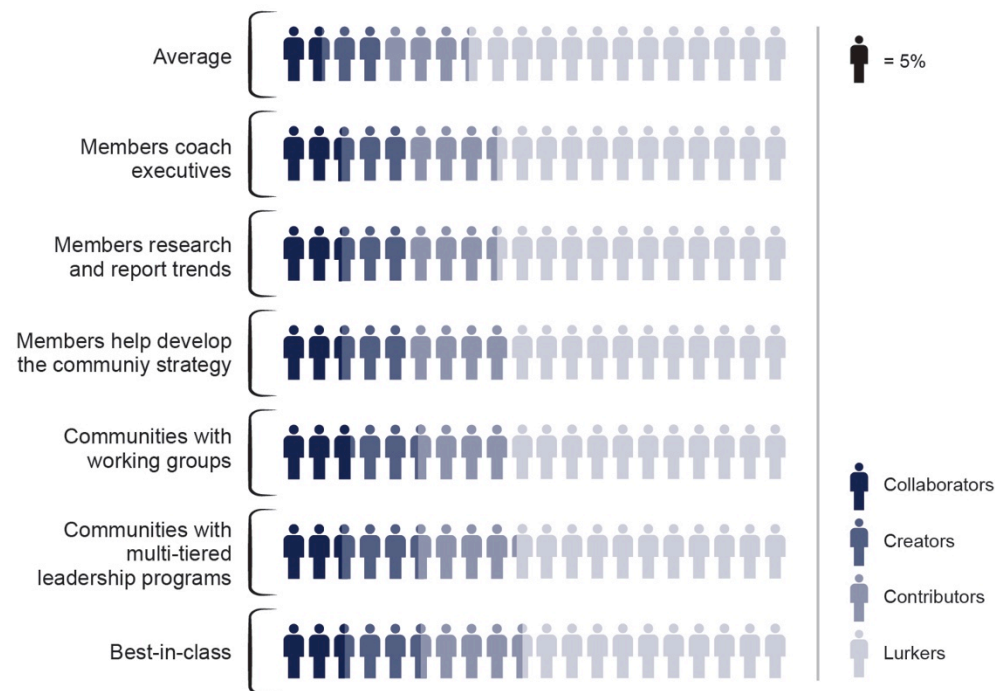
Percentage of communities with a documented and managed approach to culture

... and community managers play an important role promoting, encouraging and rewarding productive behaviors.



Percentage of communities with this community management responsibility

Communities with a culture of active participation offer collaboration and leadership opportunities to members.





Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

I'm getting pressure to remove personal interest and water cooler areas of our community, but I don't think this is a good idea – how do I help convince executives?

How to use this research:

1. Determine the issue.

Don't make assumptions about why you are getting asked to remove personal interest areas of the community, and instead have a conversation about why you are being asked to remove them – it could be a data discovery and liability issue, or it could be cultural.

2. Use data to illuminate.

Every community and organizational culture is unique, so although data can't be used to make a decision, it can be used to show that 75% of internal communities of interest can measure their value. Additionally, they are significantly more chatty than average – demonstrating that chatty, interest-based communities are actually worthwhile, despite the perception that casual conversation doesn't contribute anything to the organization.

3. Assign ownership.

Determine who will be responsible for the culture of the personal interest and water cooler areas of the community and also ask that they track their value.

FACT: *75% of internal communities of interest can measure their value, and they are 48% more chatty than average.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

The Culture of Community Engagement: An Anthropological Discussion on How to Encourage More Member Interaction

On this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members joined Chris Bailey from Chris Bailey Works to discuss his research regarding anthropology and cultures and how these concepts can be applied to online communities to increase community engagement.

Lessons learned include:

- 1. Understand the member's motivation for joining, engaging and remaining part of the community.** Only if the community manager understands the member's motivation can s/he take steps to encourage participation based on that motivation. Four main motivational characteristics are altruism, enjoyment, status seeking and reputation seeking.
- 2. Be aware of changing motivations.** At any time, a member's motivation could consist of all four of the above characteristics and/or could switch from one characteristic to another based on time and circumstance. This is the challenge for community managers as they need to uncover the community's overall prime motivator, particularly as a means to engage lurkers.
- 3. Reward systems can be a double edged sword.** Reward systems are a tool that can be used to encourage member participation in the community, but beware of the inevitable gaming that will result if the system is easily discerned.



Facilitator: Chris Bailey, Chris Bailey Works



Community Management



Community Management

The Community Management competency measures the resources dedicated to managing a productive community.

Community management may not be an official, resourced role in new communities. Mature communities have at least one dedicated community manager and the opportunity for community members and staff to take on community management responsibilities.

Community managers are stretched thin.

The community manager role becomes more strategic as communities mature, but community managers still have tactical responsibilities. The time investment required to manage the strategic focus of a community coupled with day-to-day tasks may leave community managers feeling burnt out, as described in TheCR Network's look at The Dark Side of Community Management.

Over 70% of community managers are responsible for developing the community strategy, marshaling internal support and advocating for the community internally. Yet over 80% are also responsible for daily tasks like creating, curating and sharing content, monitoring activity and listening and response and escalation. In the best-in-class communities, over 90% of community managers are responsible for these tasks, signaling that community managers are not any less tactical in mature communities – they just do more.

Empowering members impacts engagement.

Community managers can scale themselves and improve engagement in their community by giving control to community members. Community leadership programs and working groups have high member participation rates that can signal a healthy, engaged community.

Other common responsibilities community members take on include new member recruitment, welcoming new members and facilitating introductions and connections – more than 50% of communities reported members taking on these tasks.



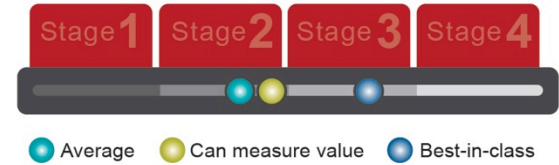
Recommendations

Evaluate the amount of community management resources your community needs.

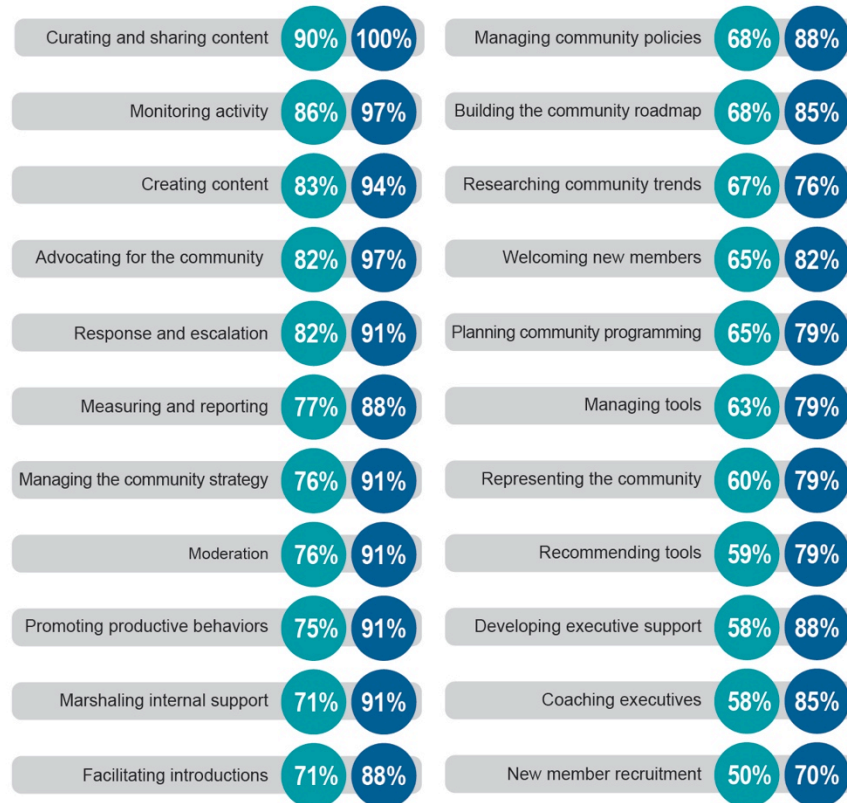
Distribute community management responsibilities to members.



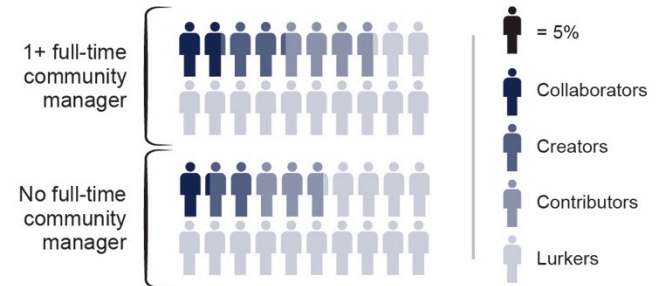
Community Management



Community managers have a lot to do...



...and finding ways to engage members is a top priority.



Community members share in these most common community management tasks.



Member roles with the greatest percentage of collaborators in the community include:

- Measuring and reporting community activity and performance
- Coaching executives and stakeholders on community engagement
- Developing executive support and advocacy
- Developing and updating the community strategy



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

I don't have budget to add new staff to my community team. Where should I prioritize my time to make sure my community continues to grow?

How to use this research:

1. Evaluate your time.

Track where you are spending your time for a week or two and then segment it into major categories – engagement, measurement, evangelism, etc. so you can see your current allocation.

2. Compare your priorities.

Look at how community managers in the most mature communities prioritize their responsibilities – and where that differs from average communities. These are a few of their priorities that differ from average communities:

- Advocating for the community internally
- Building a community roadmap
- Coaching executives

3. Create a schedule.

Reactive issue management can eat up all of your time if you let it. Make sure it doesn't by blocking your calendar so you can dedicate time to what is important – and make sure to protect that time. Delegate what you can to community members and give the community space to take care of itself sometimes.

FACT: *Communities with community managers are more likely to be able to measure the value of the community.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Scaling for Success: Growing Your Community Team

For this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members focused discussion on community teams - many have grown a team and have a clear handle on what did (and didn't) work, while many others have arrived at that critical point of growth but have questions about how to proceed (and succeed!). On this call members discussed good practices and challenges.

Lessons learned include:

1. **Prepare to hire and train a candidate in advance of an expected increased workload.** The best course of action is documentation. Track all the time spent on various tasks, track requests and report productivity on a daily/weekly/monthly basis. This documentation and comparative historical data will rationalize a hiring request and show the growing need for a new position.
2. **Be on the lookout for potential candidates rather than sourcing candidates at the time of hiring.** Pre-screen candidates sourced through networking to shorten the recruitment process.
3. **Create an overview of a “day in the life of a community manager.”** To help executives recognize the importance of investing in the growth of a community team, show them exactly what a community manager does on a daily basis. Show them all the ways these individuals impact the customer, and connect that to how it benefits the organization daily basis.



Content & Programming



Content & Programming

The Content & Programming competency measures a community's formal activities and content.

Less mature communities don't have much planning around community activities and content. As this competency matures, an editorial calendar integrates content and programs into the community strategy and organizes member contributions.

Communities need consistent content and programming.

Communities offer a variety of content and programs, and the frequency of some activities points to some emerging standards. The top five most common programs were: content promotion, welcome emails, newsletters, occasional surveys and badges or status.

Communities with consistent programming – those using regular programming instead of occasional programming - have better engagement profiles. Communities that consistently schedule content and programming with strategic editorial calendars have better engagement profiles than the survey average and communities without strategic editorial calendars, too.

Highlighting member contributions increases community engagement.

The content and programs that had the most dramatic link on engagement included those that required and/or spotlighted member collaboration: working groups, regular offline and online events and member profile promotion.

Interestingly, these kinds of content and programs are also more likely to pique the interest of executives. C-level participation rates were higher in communities that offer events, newsletters, surveys and working groups.

Recommendations

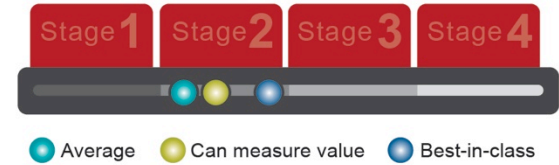
Create consistency in your content and programs.

Plan content and programming around a strategic editorial calendar.

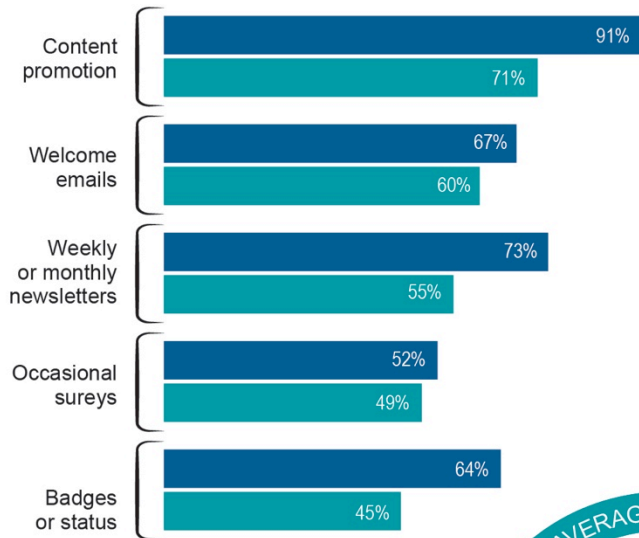
Highlight member contributions in content and programs.



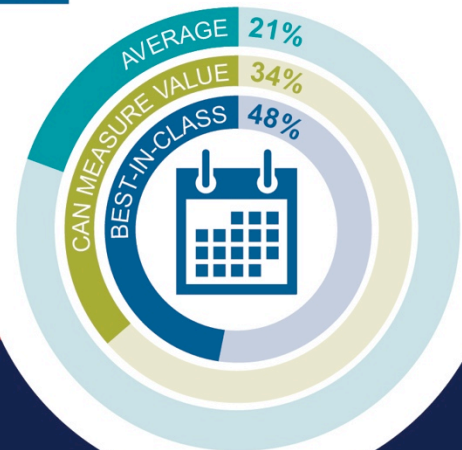
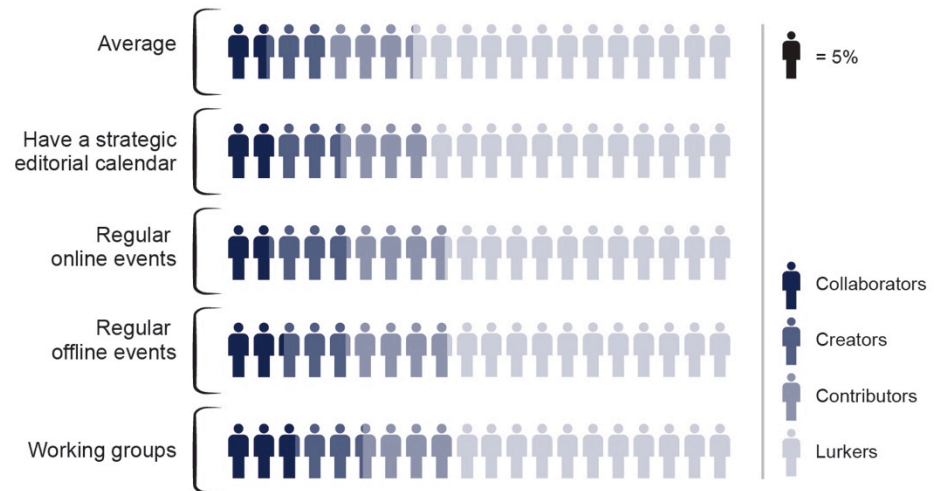
Content & Programming



Communities offer a variety of standard content and programs...



... and consistency in programming is linked to better member engagement.



The best-in-class communities organize content around a strategic editorial calendar that is integrated with functional groups in the organization.



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

My community members live in locations around the world. I've heard face-to-face meetings are important for relationships, but what if we can't all get together?

How to use this research:

1. Refute your assumptions.

While it's true that face-to-face events are great ways to help members connect, the data shows that online and offline events are almost equally effective at improving community engagement rates.

2. Don't over-complicate.

Events are great opportunities for community members to get to know other members (and the community's managers) in real time. However, they do not need to be complicated or complex – especially to start – and it is more important that they be regular to establish a pattern of behavior. Some easy ideas:

- Weekly free form happy hour chats
- Scheduled AMA (Ask Me Anything) discussions with executives or subject matter experts
- Monday morning roll call and top three priorities for the week

3. Experiment.

Try a few different types of events to see what works for your community. Also keep in mind that sometimes you will have to have patience before events stick and become popular - so don't cycle through experiments too quickly.

FACT: *Communities that host offline events have a lurker rate at 56%, and communities that host regular online events have a lurker rate of 57%.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Understanding Content Strategy: Practical Tips and Best Practices

On this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members joined Margot Bloomstein from Appropriate, Inc. to discuss content strategy.

Lessons learned included:

1. A content strategy includes:

- A message architecture to align communication efforts.
- A content audit to know what content is needed by first examining what already exists.
- A content curation process to filter the content for the specific purpose, place, time and audience.

2. **Inconsistency is a common pain point when designing a content strategy.** A message architecture allows the organization to reflect back to the message that they wish to consistently deliver when interacting with consumers.

3. **One of the biggest issues within organizations today is that no one owns the content strategy.** It becomes a part of everyone's job and the effort is passive. As a result, nothing really happens because it is not owned by any one individual who has it incorporated as a part of his/her goals.



Facilitator: Margot Bloomstein, Appropriate, Inc



Policies & Governance



Policies & Governance

The Policies & Governance competency measures how organizations are structured to support community efforts.

Policies and governance address a community's terms governing participation and guidelines for community culture and boundaries, as well as how an organization integrates the community in its operations.

Policies and governance are enablers, not inhibitors.

Communities with guidelines and policies outlining ideal behaviors have better engagement than communities using policies that only restrict certain behaviors. More crucially, best-in-class communities are almost twice as likely (91%) to have enabling policies vs. restrictive ones compared to the average (50%).

Community managers are an important influencing factor in creating more mature policies. They are champions for promoting and modeling good behavior, and when community managers are responsible for developing community policies, those communities are almost three times more likely to create enabling guidelines vs. restrictive ones.

Community playbooks are hallmarks of mature community programs.

In addition to enabling policies, best-in-class communities are more likely to document organizational standards for community management in community playbooks. Best-in-class communities are more than twice as likely to have playbooks as the average community. Playbooks act as enablers to scale community management responsibilities.

Crisis planning is emergent.

Surprisingly, 55% of communities have no crisis plan. Although best-in-class communities were more than twice as likely to have an approved crisis plan, 21% were still lacking one.



Recommendations

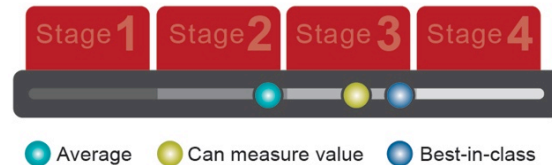
Develop community policies that promote ideal behavior as well as restrict harmful behaviors.

Publish a community playbook.

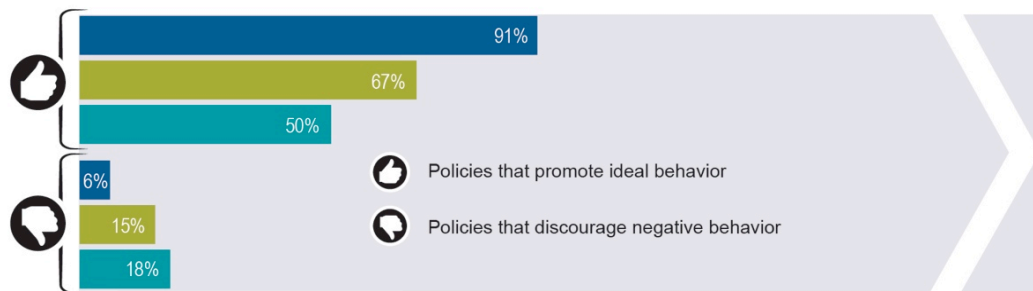
Ensure you have a crisis plan.



Policies & Governance



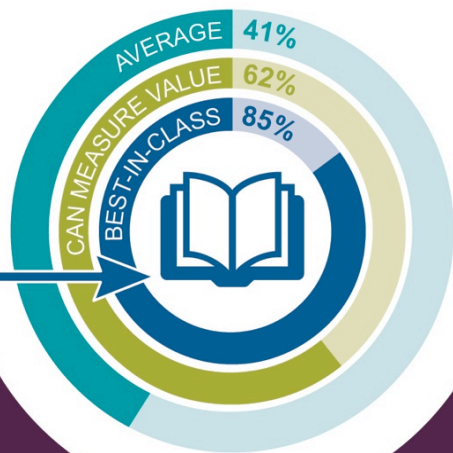
Community policies are most likely to be enablers, promoting ideal behavior...



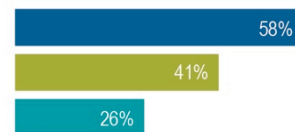
...and these policies are linked to better member engagement.



Best-in-class communities document common engagement scenarios and guidance in community playbooks...



...but crisis planning is less common.



Percentage of communities that have an approved crisis plan



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

I'm starting a new community and need to create some rules for engagement. Does anyone have examples or recommendations?

How to use this research:

1. Define what success looks like.

Make an exhaustive list of everything you don't want to see in the community – and everything you do want to see, including who is participating and how. Be as specific as possible and include stakeholders in this brainstorming.

2. Involve community members.

Communities with playbooks and mature policies are more likely to include members in strategic, tactical and policy related decisions. While the relationship between the two things is cyclical – getting members involved early can help drive policy maturity.

3. Develop enabling policies that encourage desired behavior.

Of the communities surveyed that can measure value, 67% have enabling policies. Think of these kinds of policies as a “to-do” list vs. just a list of restricted behaviors.

Research shows that it doesn't take years to develop mature policies and guidelines. 44% of communities that are only a year old have policies that promote positive behavior.

FACT: *85% of best-in-class communities have playbooks vs. 41% of average communities.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Creating a Community Playbook

On this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members joined Lauren Vargas from Aetna to learn about community playbooks.

Lessons learned included:

- 1. Set the expectation that the playbook is meant to be an ever-evolving document.** It is not meant to be a command and control document, but rather a protection document that allows people to feel comfortable having conversations online. The structure of the playbook must have flexibility in order to ebb and flow the same way that conversations ebb and flow.
- 2. Conduct personal interviews with people who might have access to the playbook or for whom the process will be customized.** The reason behind this is because the way that the conversation is mapped, the way that a certain situation is mapped or the way a certain conversation is prioritized may not be the same across the entire organization.
- 3. Harmonize the playbook with existing policies and guidelines.** It must complement what already exists, not supersede it. The playbook must speak to those policies, the code of conduct, the privacy policy, etc.



Facilitator: Lauren Vargas, Aetna



Tools



Tools

The Tools competency measures the infrastructure and features that give members access to content, activity and each other.

All online communities operate on a social software foundation, and markers of how a community matures in this competency relate to how well integrated the community's technical features are to where and how the community members interact.

Responsive community infrastructure supports advanced community programming.

Communities hosted on dedicated platforms integrated with other places the community interacts and can change based on the community's needs are linked to community maturity in many other areas – including community strategy, approach to culture, formal community leadership programs, integrated editorial calendars and community policies and guidelines.

These platforms have a more mature engagement profile with a lower number of lurkers (53%) than communities with less integration and flexibility (65%). They are also significantly more likely to be able to measure value (71%) vs. communities on platforms that are not responsive to community needs (49%).

Mature communities have more advanced collaboration and management features.

Best-in-class communities had more functionality than average, including features like microblogging, video and image sharing, polling, content management, wikis, ideation, groups, influencer tracking and community manager dashboards.

Standard features – those with 60% or more adoption across communities – include member profiles, discussion boards, blogs, video and image sharing, groups and mobile access.

Not surprisingly, communities with executive participation were more likely to have mobile access, microblogging and video and image sharing capabilities.



Recommendations

Choose software that is responsive to the changing needs of your community.

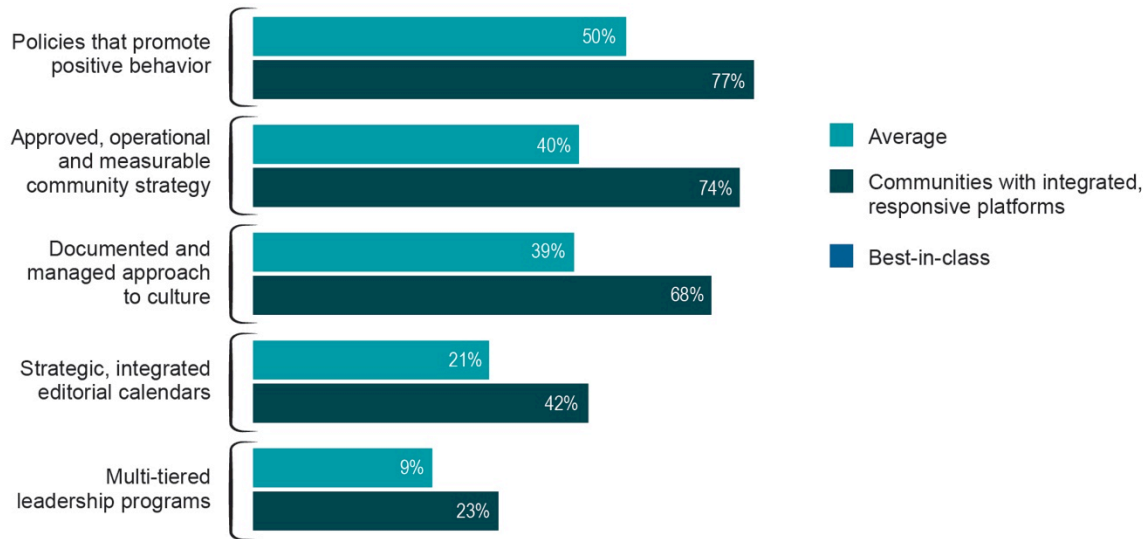
Align community program needs with the community feature set.

Pair your community features with different audience needs.

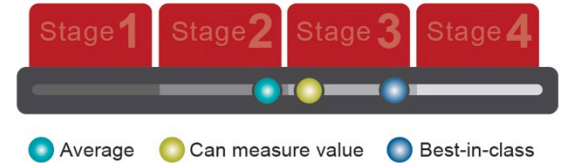
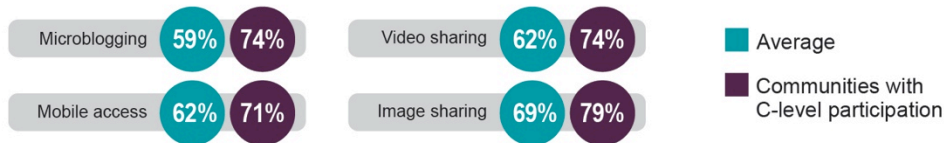


Tools

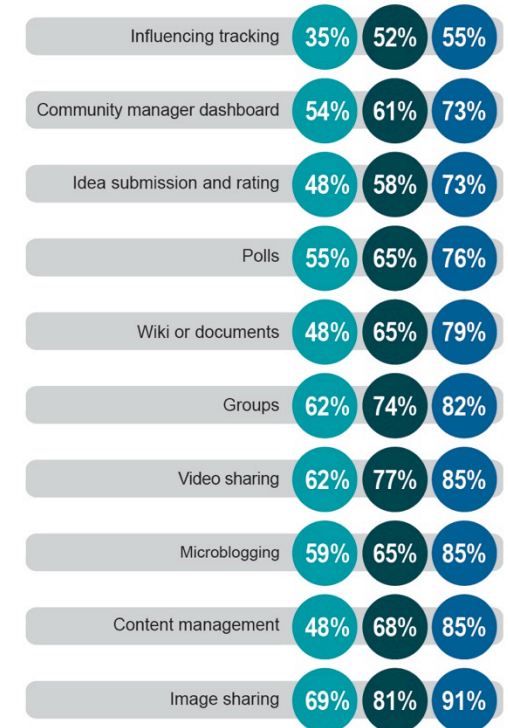
Communities hosted on responsive community infrastructure are more likely have mature community programs...



Features more common in communities with executive participation:



... and offer a feature set closer to par with the best-in-class communities.





Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

How do I select a community platform?

How to use this research:

Community owners have no shortage of vendors to turn to when looking for an online space to host a community. The research points to some important considerations:

1. Find a platform that can adapt to members' needs.

Platforms that can be easily changed to respond to the changing needs of the community have higher member engagement levels and only 53% lurkers.

2. Look for content management features that allow members to easily find the information they need.

Well-designed content management systems help members source their information needs, therefore more easily find value in the community. It makes sense that they are much more common in best-in-class communities.

3. Ensure the platform integrates with places the community interacts.

Communities hosted on platforms that are integrated with other places the community interacts have higher member engagement levels (only 58% lurkers) than those that do not (at 66% lurkers). Externally this may mean integrating with social networks, and internally it may mean integration with email and business applications.

FACT: *85% of best-in-class communities have content management features in their community platform.*



Lessons from TheCR Network

Defining Requirements that Scale

This call with TheCR Network members was facilitated by Thomas Vander Wal from Design for Context to discuss social software and adoption.

Lessons learned included:

1. When sourcing social software purchases, organizations should be cognizant that **there is an incredible complexity associated with human social interaction that is not easily captured in software.**
2. **Be aware that the requirements of the tools move from the simple to the complex very quickly** (usually within four to six months). Adding further complication is that the needs of the business also change. Keeping this in mind, Thomas advised that when defining requirements that scale, the focus should always be on simplicity.
3. **Do not fall into the trap of buying software without first mapping it to the culture of the organization.** This is a crucial step missed by many organizations.



Facilitator: Thomas Vander Wal, Design for Context



Metrics & Measurement

Metrics & Measurement

The Metrics & Measurement competency measures the tracking and reporting of the community's performance.

Many things can be measured to track a community's progress. Less mature reporting is anecdotal or tracks basic activity and content. More mature reporting may also track basic activities and stories but is focused on behaviors and outcomes related to the community strategy.

Consistency is key.

Consistent reporting is necessary to have the most complete picture of the pulse of the community. Almost 60% of communities prepare monthly, and about 25% prepare reports more frequently. Frequency depends on the community's level of activity and community management resources needed to prepare reports.

Community metrics are standardizing.

From a review of a selection of community reports, we found that reporting structure and metrics tracked varies, which may be the result of different community goals. However, data shows that communities are reporting many of the same types of metrics.

The most common metrics communities are tracking include: total membership, active members, total activity, volume of new content and contributing members.

Mature community reports link activity to value.

Almost half of communities surveyed reported being able to measure the value of their community. Communities that can measure value were more likely to metrics including: volume of new comments and content, new member activity, behavior flows, resolution time and questions answered.



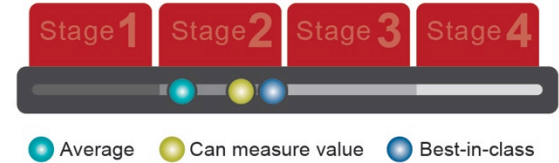
Recommendations

Prepare monthly reports to track activity and share results with stakeholders.

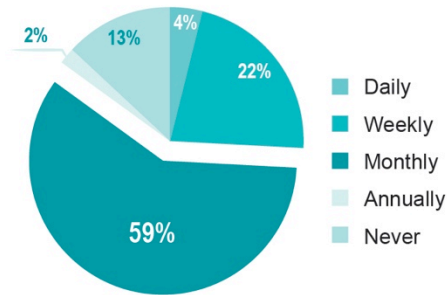
Align your reporting with your community's objectives.



Metrics & Measurement



Almost 60% of communities prepare reports monthly...



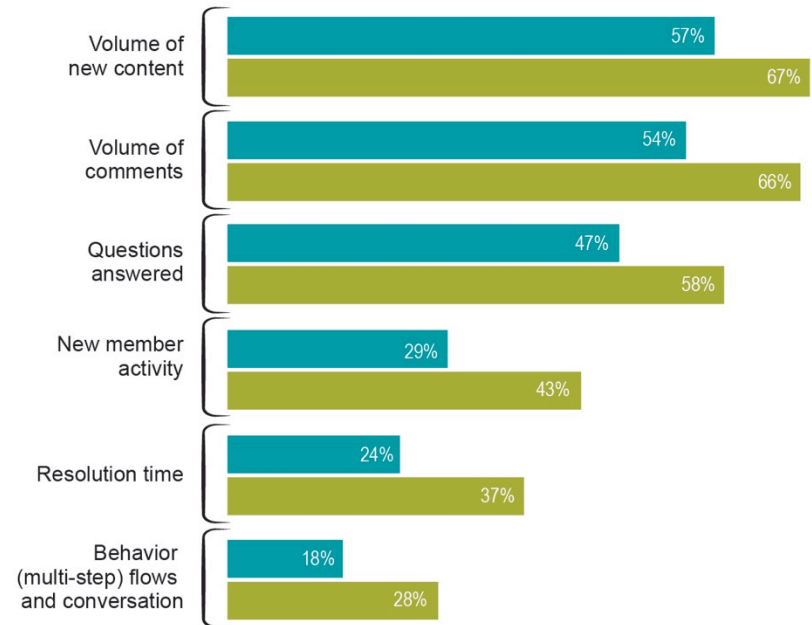
...which commonly track basic activities.



The most mature communities are more likely to be able to measure value.



Communities that can measure value track more of all kinds of metrics, especially the following:



Be Data-Driven

Community manager challenge:

I'm getting started with tracking metrics for my community and looking for guidance – where do I begin? What metrics are most important to track?

How to use this research:

1. Ensure you have a clear and measurable strategy.

Almost 80% of best-in-class communities have a measurable community strategy. Why? That – more than anything else – will give you clear guidance on what to track by articulating the business goals and behavior change you hope to see.

2. Identify a consistent reporting timeframe.

About 60% of survey respondents prepare reports monthly. Reporting more often is likely a waste of time because behavior change takes time, but reporting monthly is often enough to get the feedback everyone needs to make adjustments to tactics.

3. Determine reporting audiences.

Think about who will be viewing your progress and goals. What story are you trying to tell them? Choose metrics that support the goals of your community and can be easily understood.

FACT: *85% of best-in-class communities can measure the value of their community.*

Lessons from TheCR Network

Got Numb3rs? Community Metrics & Analysis

On this Roundtable call, TheCR Network members joined Jillian Bejtlich, who shared her presentation from the Enterprise 2.0 Conference in June 2012 on the topic of metrics and analysis.

Lessons learned included:

1. **Focus on the end goal.** As the data becomes overwhelming, remember to always stay focused on this goal - write it down and refer back to it often. If your data is not helping you move towards this goal, abandon it in favor of the more useful data that substantiates your objective.
2. **Determine the metrics needed by asking yourself simple questions.** To help sift through the data, ask yourself the following questions: “Who?”, “When?”, “How?” and “What?”. Who is this data for? When is it needed and when can I get it? How will I use this data? What metric goal does it answer?
3. **Specify how long it will realistically take to provide a report.** In the world of data, some things can take awhile to get your hands on. If it will realistically take two weeks to get the data you need and compile a report, do not be afraid to state that it will take two weeks.



Facilitator: Jillian Bejtlich, The Community Roundtable

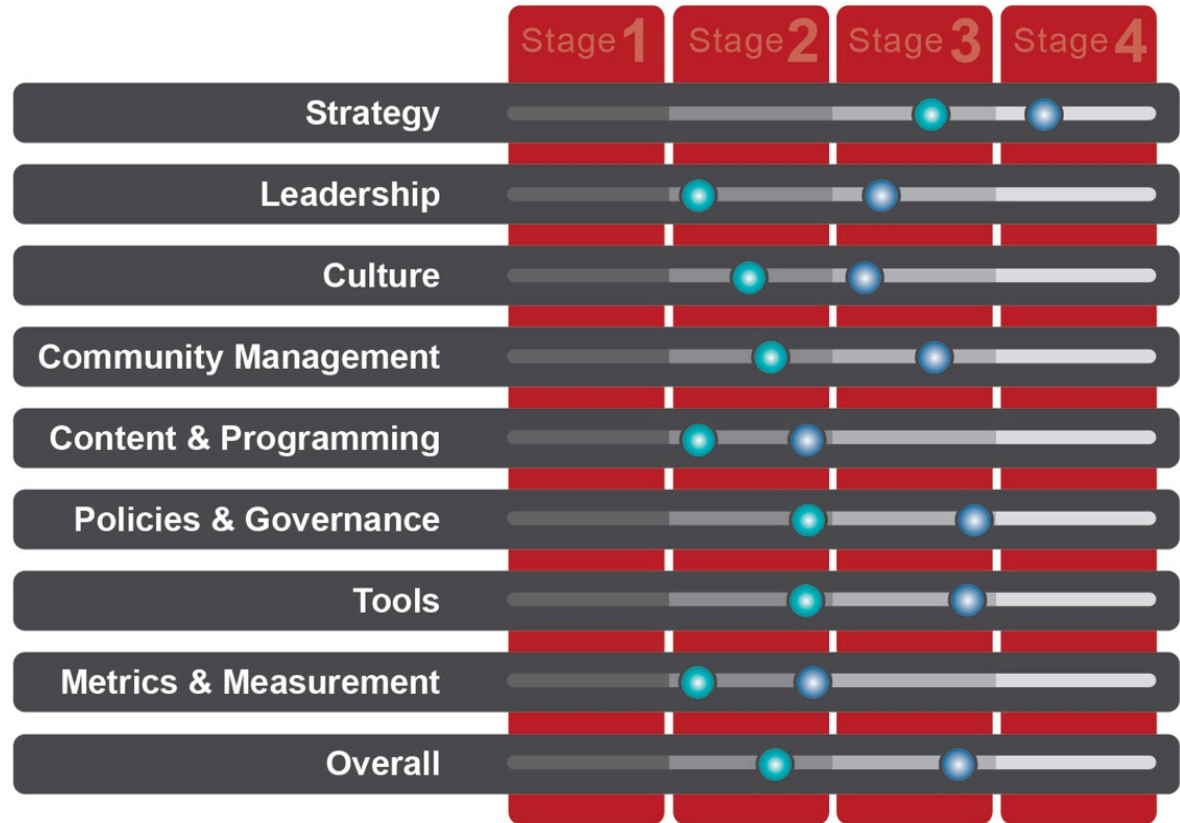
Next Steps and Recommendations

Community Maturity in 2014

Overall community maturity has been evolving rapidly especially in the area of community strategy, confirming that some of the basics about what a community is and what it can do for an organization are more widely understood and accepted. There are still wide gaps in organizations' ability to execute on community strategies with the biggest opportunities in developing content and programming approaches and in developing measurement techniques.

Strategy and governance are maturing but also have the biggest performance gaps between average and best-in-class communities.

Community programming and measurement are two lagging areas of performance for the market as a whole – with inconsistent or non-existent practices.



● Average ● Best-in-class

Key Research Recommendations



Invest in community maturity.

Some of the following are key markers of mature community programs are:

- ✓ A measurable community strategy.
- ✓ A fully resourced roadmap.
- ✓ A community playbook.
- ✓ One or more full-time community managers.
- ✓ Executive participation.



Develop an advocate program.

Community advocacy and leadership programs are highly correlated with community engagement, mature policies and value. Start by:

- ✓ Identifying influencers and advocates.
- ✓ Asking advocates to help create a program that is a win-win-win.
- ✓ Developing advocate terms or a playbook.



Encourage executive participation.

Participation from executives influences both the engagement of the community and the success of the community program. Start by:

- ✓ Understanding executive needs.
- ✓ Piquing their interest in participating.
- ✓ Supporting and coaching them until they are comfortable.

Research Recommendations by Competency

Competency Recommendations

Strategy Assess your community strategy to ensure it is actionable and measurable.
Develop a community roadmap that addresses key gaps and opportunities.
Ensure appropriate levels of community management staffing.

Leadership Invest in your community advocacy program early on.
Develop an executive coaching plan.

Culture Assign ownership and responsibility for managing culture.
Extend community management responsibilities to members.
Incorporate cultural standards into your community planning.

Community Management Evaluate the amount of community management resources your community needs.
Distribute community management responsibilities to members.

Content & Programming Create consistency in your content and programs.
Plan content and programming around a strategic editorial calendar.
Highlight member contributions in content and programs.

Policies & Governance Develop community policies that promote ideal behavior as well as restrict harmful behaviors.
Publish a community playbook.
Ensure you have a crisis plan.

Tools Choose software that is responsive to the changing needs of your community.
Align community program needs with the community feature set.
Pair your community features with different audience needs.

Metrics & Measurement Prepare monthly reports to track activity and share results with stakeholders.
Align your reporting with your community's objectives.

Appendix (i.e. What's Next?)

Read Up: More Research

In addition to the exclusive research available to TheCR Network members, The Community Roundtable research and presentations are available to view on our website.

Community Management Fundamentals



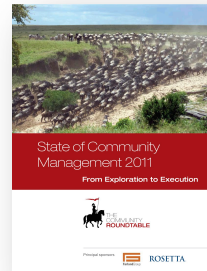
Introduction to the discipline of community management and why it matters.

Dark Side of Community Management



Perspectives on the personal challenges for community managers from TheCR Network members.

State of Community Management 2011



A compilation of lessons from TheCR Network members, organized by the competencies in the Community Maturity Model.

State of Community Management 2012



A report that examines the evolution of the social business industry and analyzes organizational patterns and lessons learned from industry leaders and practitioners.

The Social Executive - Case Study



A study designed to help better understand the level of executive engagement, how executives are setting priorities and the value they expect from social business.

Get Started: TheCR Toolkits

The Community Roundtable Toolkits are stand-alone resources designed to help individuals map out the next challenges in their community journey. They include exclusive research, curated content and case studies, training videos and worksheets all designed to get you started.



The Start Toolkit aims to educate individuals and community teams on how to think about getting started on their community journey.



The Build Toolkit aims to educate community teams who are working to organize, assess and report on their community efforts.



The State of Community Management Toolkit includes all of our SOCM research, covering leading practices required to create a successful community program.



The Social Executive Toolkit is designed to help social and community teams understand executive adoption so that they can effectively coach executives.

Join TheCR Network

The Network of the Smartest Social Business Leaders

Membership in TheCR Network saves community and social business leaders time and improves the quality of their work by connecting them quickly with peers, experts and curated information.

You're in Good Company

We ♥ TheCR



95
Member
Companies

95%

Of members agree that the content and peer input improves the quality of their work

91%

Of members say filtered access to content and info saves them time

Member Exclusives



Concierge Service

TheCR team is at the ready to help you find the people and resources you need to get the job done right. Simply send us an email or give us call. We're listening.



Roundtable Calls

Weekly Roundtable calls offer members exclusive access to industry experts and leading social business practitioners, in an intimate, members-only setting.



Research Library

Members have unlimited access to over 200 Roundtable reports, industry research, templates, case studies and articles, all carefully created and curated by our team over the last five years.



25% of members work with external-facing communities.

25% of members work with internal-facing communities.

50% of members work with both internal and external-facing communities.



Happy Hour
Chats



TheCR
Summits



Community
Manager
Working Groups



Working
Out Loud

Dig In: The Community Roundtable's Services

In conjunction with the ground-breaking State of Community Management research, The Community Roundtable facilitates the network of the smartest social business leaders and provides toolkits, training and advisory services.



TheCR Network

Membership in TheCR Network provides community managers and social business practitioners exclusive access to curated content, ground-breaking research, peers and experts, and individualized concierge services.



Toolkits

TheCR Toolkits are stand-alone resources that provide actionable insights, templates and exclusive research for each stage of the community journey, designed to enable community managers to effectively move their programs forward.



Training

We deliver scalable, customized training for external and internal community managers and social and community strategists, as well as executive coaching either in person or as part of an on-demand curriculum.



Advisory

Custom advisory enables companies looking to start their journey, build out their community program or grow a community program that is not yet at its full potential take advantage of our expertise through on-site or virtual workshops.

About The Community Roundtable

Mission: Advance the Business of Community

Champion Advocate for the needs of community business owners and teams

Educate Provide training solutions to community and social business leaders

Curate Aggregate, document and share community management best practices

Services

TheCR Network | Research | Community Management Training | Advisory

Leadership Team



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Member and client organizations



Acknowledgements

A special thank you to TheCR Network members, research participants and others who contributed insights, ideas and time to this research helping us advance the business of community.

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