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60 Insights from Experienced Community Managers

1st Edition

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Compiled by Blaise Grimes-Viort,
Head of Community Management, eModeration



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About the Author

Blaise Grimes-Viort is the Head of Community Management for eModeration, a provider of Community Management & Content Moderation services. His responsibilities range from heading up an international team of Community Managers working on client community development & management, consulting on engagement strategies & supporting clients on how to engage successfully with their community's participants.

He started his career in Community Management in 2001 & has worked with global brands, startups & charities, in fields such as Videogaming, Social Networking, Pharmaceutical, Broadcasting, Publishing and ISPs. This varied experience has provided him with a rich background in product development & customer collaboration, & the passion to help organisations build thriving online communities & social media outposts.



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Foreword

As communities start to evolve, brands are starting to realise that they must have community managers to look after their investments, and that this is a job for a dedicated professional, whether in-house or outsourced.

Community managers may have an enormously diverse set of responsibilities, but above all it's to develop & nurture the community, to encourage engagement & participation. The tasks to achieve that goal can be fairly wide-reaching & onerous. Responding to posts at 3am? Yes. Organising an army of volunteer moderators? Yes. Preparing a business case? Oh, yes. A tough job.

So let's hear it for community managers. And hear from them, right here...



Tamara Littleton, CEO & Founder
eModeration



As society migrates into online communities, we become pioneers exploring new frontiers of the virtual landscape of our minds.



Laurel Papworth, CEO
The Community Crew



Have escalation systems, policies & procedures, but above all have the right person's mobile number accessible & be prepared to call at 3am when your worst case scenario eventuates.



Alison Michalk, Community Director



You have to be a top contributor. Managing the community is not enough. Lead by example & others will follow suit.



Angela Connor, Social Media Manager Capstrat
Author “[18 Rules of Community Engagement](#)”



Your Community Manager reflects the soul of your business.



Bruno Boutot
Consultant, Journalism & Communities



When community demands exceed business objectives & resources it becomes similar to parenting when 'tough love' is needed.



Connie Bensen, Senior Community Manager

Dell



Being competitive is human nature. Therefore, gamification of online communities drives desired member activities; both quality & quantity.



Dan Marotta, Community Strategist

PTC



Don't take it personally. They aren't angry at you - they're angry at your decisions. Be confident and keep your cool.



Dave Cayem, General Manager
Delphi Forums & Talk City



Always remember that your community members are your life blood. Lose them & you lose everything.



David Lowe, Community Manager

StikiNotes.com



Community management is the process of making decisions with good intentions & then cleaning up after the explosion.



Derek Powazek, CoFounder and CEO

Fertile Medium



Tap into the reason your community members are there & what information is most valuable to them. Plan your content & engagement accordingly.



Debra Askanase, Engagement Strategist
Community Organizer 2.0



B2B is (very) similar to B2C in social media. You're connecting with humans. Humans exist in both.



DJ Waldow, Founder & CEO

Waldow Social



Judging a community by the direct revenue it generates is like judging a church by the collection plate returns.



Eric Foster, Community Manager



Every community needs a cub reporter to report the news and document its history. Psssst. That's you.



Eric Suesz, Senior Community Manager

Ning



At every step your goal is to provide your members with something of value, interest or humour either directly or indirectly.



Greg Hollings
Social Media & Community Manager



Find a business issue to solve & an executive sponsor that benefits from solving that problem.



Harold Kip, Community Consultant

KREM



The most successful community managers understand that their internal community is more important than any other. Having your boss & colleagues on side can help you get things done to let the outside community you manage flourish. Without that support, you're sunk.



Heather Taylor, Community Manager

BBC



Never underestimate the value of a general chatting space. Topics or support needs may bring people in, but it's the letting off steam & nattering about TV that creates friendships.



Holly Seddon, Community User Acquisition

NBCUniversal, Inc



"Everybody goes home happy" is the community management mantra. It's how you approach solving problems, communicating with fans, & setting expectations about what you will do & what you will ask of the community itself.



Jake McKee, Chief Innovation Officer

Ant's Eye View



Every successful community has taken time, dedication & the presence of a present and active community manager to thrive.



Jamie Pappas, Vice President Social Media

AMP Agency



Think about what motivates people & what brings them together. Approach content & engagement like that & you'll move the metrics you need to, no matter what social media or marketing software you choose.



Janet Aronica, Community Director

OneForty.com



You must know every detail of what's going on inside the company & how that'll make the community feel. You must touch every department from Marketing to Sales to Customer Service and PR, & be the voice inside the organization of what your community wants & needs.



Jenn Pedde, CoFounder
TheCommunityManager.com



Never get defensive. Remember to put yourself in their shoes and have compassion for the situation.



Jenna Langer, Director of Community Strategy,

Livefyre.com



Take time to pause. If you're the first to answer every question in your community, you'll tend to stifle other conversation because an "authority has spoken." Give members a chance to be helpful & by all means, encourage them behind the scenes if no one is jumping up to help out on their own.



Jim Storer, CoFounder
The Community Roundtable



One of the fundamentals of community management is quality versus quantity. The size of the crowd does not matter, if not many people have a good time. This is where community managers come in, to focus on engagement & make sure the community has a fabulous time!



Judi Huck, Community Manager

Producteev.com



Be careful not to confuse building a community with talking to an engaged audience. Get them talking to each other.



Justin Isaf, Community Manager
The Huffington Post



Expect the unexpected - your community members won't use your site & the means of interaction you set up in the same way as you - or as each other. Let user behaviour guide your design principles when it comes to taking part in a community around your content.



Laura Oliver, Community Coordinator

Guardian.co.uk



There is no cookie cutter community management role; be your own case study.



Lauren Vargas, Community Strategist

Aetna



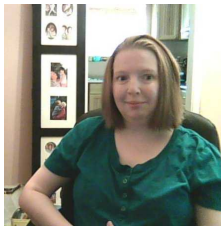
Never forget the purpose of the community. If it is to provide support to people at a vulnerable point in their lives, you may need to take a more protective or interventionist stance than you would with other communities.



Leah Williams, Community & Social Media Manager,
Breast Cancer Care



Communities only work when **EVERYONE** contributes. Community managers must not be exclusionary & only spend time with power users. You will be amazed at the results you get when members are allowed to participate in as much of the work & decisions as reasonably possible.



Lisa Bartels, Associate Community Manager

BabyCenter



Community management isn't about being a rockstar; it's about being a great, behind-the-scenes host.



Maggie McGary, Community & Social Media Manager,
The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association



A good community manager should learn as much from the community they manage, as they put back in themselves. It's a two-way thing. You're a member of the community, just like everyone else.



Matt Brawn, Community Manager
Hypernaked



Community and Customer Service should be distinct teams – but having a community starts with having strong CS. If your CS house is not in order, your organization must fix that first.



Matt Fairchild, Community Manager

TinyCo



Be in ALL the places where people are talking about your company & be there in an appropriate way.



Mecca Ibrahim, Head of Social Media

Great British Chefs



Take the time to understand and support your biggest fans & community members. However, do keep in mind that what the super users want & need may be different from that of the average user.



Megan Berry, Marketing Manager

Klout



Are the members happy? Is there value & what is it? Answers can be deduced through analytical prowess & calculation. They can also be discovered, with deep context & quality, by simply committing to being a member in your own community. Engagement is the balance to your measures.



Megan Murray, Founding Board Member
Community BackChannel



Never underestimate what a telephone call & a few honest compliments can do to activate someone in your community.



Melle Gloerich, Community Manager

NGN



Know your community - who they are, what they do
& what is important to them.



Misti Crawford, Global Wikonnnect
Community Manager CSC



Community Management with Facebook is anything but quick, easy, cheap and lucrative.



Olivier Tripet, Community Strategist

b-spirit



Your guidelines are a vision statement for your community. They tell people who you are and want to be.



Patrick O'Keefe, Owner iFroggy Network
Author "[Managing Online Forums](#)"



Know your users. Build the right tools to identify who has contributed most & then develop a relationship with them.



Philip Wride
Social Media & Community Strategist



Community management is the work of translating information & value between two or more constituencies - at its most strategic, it can change a business model & at its most fundamental it is supporting individuals who are looking for information.



Rachel Happe, Principal & Founder
The Community Roundtable



If you want to engage your community, listen to them & give them what they want, not what you want them to like!



Raphaël Hunold, Community Manager

M6 Metropole TV



Children thrive within real and virtual worlds where they can safely & creatively express themselves. Virtual Worlds offer them an opportunity to collaborate & co-create on a global scale. Rather than fearing the web, we would do well to teach children its benefits & possibilities. They are not only today's pioneers, they are tomorrow's cutting-edge leaders.



Rebecca Newton, Chief Community Officer

MindCandy.com



Start small. Focus on getting 50 members active and grow steadily from there. You don't need a big launch to be a big success.



Richard Millington, Community Consultant

FeverBee



Put your community members at the heart of everything, with so many different people it makes the job so much easier.



Roberto Kusabbi, Community & Social Media Manager,
The British Heart Foundation



In my experience, the most successful online communities are those which provide users with participatory frameworks which, at the same time, are meaningful to those participants & align well with business objectives.



Robin Hamman, Director of Digital
Edelman



Sometimes automation frees you up to focus on important tasks, but no tasks are more important than treating your customers well. Use automation when necessary, but if you get even an inkling that automation isn't working, cut it off & go back to manual efforts.



Robyn Tippins, Community Manager ReadWriteWeb
Author "[Community 101](#)"



My social media success formula: “Inform + Engage + Entertain + Surprise = Lots of true “fans” of your brand”.



Rowan Barnett, Head of Community

BILD.de



Community Managers are absolutely essential in the modern customer experience. We have enormous influence in encouraging positive change.



Ryan Arndt, Global Community Manager
International Game Developers' Association



Moderation is the daily practice of reinforcing the core values that bind your community members. Each interaction is a chance to knit your members more closely together. A healthy community emerges out of thousands of tiny interactions, so make every opportunity to moderate count!



Scott Drummond, Social Media Director

HOST



Community Managers are the soul, heart, early radar and customer conscience of the organization - years from now, we will laugh at when companies didn't have them.



Sean Moffitt, Managing Director Wikibrands

Author "[Wikibrands](#)"



When dealing with eCommerce community queries I try to show I am listening every step of the way, as no matter how small or trivial the issue may appear to me - it's important to them.



Stuart G Hall, Head of Community
Shopping.com



Concentrate on facilitating conversations, & try to avoid the temptation to jump into discussions too soon as you may inadvertently shut them down. In other words, be the conduit, not the cork.



Sue John, Community Manager

BritishExpats.com



Empower your community to go far! Don't only help them on things related to your product, but give them the ammunition to excel in their personal & professional pursuits.



Tamar Weinberg, Community Support at Mashable & Community Manager of Namecheap & AYTm.com
Author "[The New Community Rules](#)"



Show me a list of people who are NOT influential to their friends and family, & I will take them OFF my influencer list.



Thomas Knoll, Community Architect

LaunchRock.com



Conflicts in communities can be easily compared to family conflicts. If partners are not careful enough to solve their problems right at the start, they'll split up. Therefore a conscious CM is always keeping an eye on conflicts before they are disastrous for a community.



Tom Noeding, Community Manager

Evangelisch.de



Plan hard, manage easy. Time invested up front in designing to goals & member desires means less work training and explaining. Communities can break down barriers to information. Don't re-create silos that already exist.



Trisha Liu, Enterprise Community Manager

ArcSight



There is no greater reward a community manager experiences than the ability to bridge distance over the wires & make the world a smaller place.



Vanessa DiMauro, CEO
Leader Networks



Education is key to community management. Explaining the difficulties your company faces with an open & honest attitude ensures your community is on board with your discussions & has the potential of the community coming up with solutions to your problems.



Vincent Boon, Head of Community

giffgaff



My life revolves around making sure my community can always get in touch with me & their loved ones. It's an obsession.



Tera Kristen, Community Manager

Kik



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Final Words

I would like to thank all the Community Managers who were kind enough to respond to my request for their insights into Community Management, and gave up their precious time to humour me. Thank you, you made this compilation possible.

I hope that you will continue to find value in the information and research I publish in this format. Please do feel free to get in touch if you have any suggestions or thoughts about how I could improve this and future documents, and any ideas you would like to see covered.

I hope to released an updated edition of this eBook, raising the number of insights to 100. If you would like to be considered for inclusion in future editions, please fill in the web form at the end of the [announcement blog post for this eBook](#).



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