

THE COMMUNITY MARKETER'S MANIFESTO

Start the revolution
in community management
with advocacy

In today's race to attract, retain and grow customers, it's not enough for B2B companies to deliver a great product or solution. It takes something more. Something beyond a perfect price point, great content or superb customer service.



It takes a community

Communities connect people who share the same interests and concerns. They can help customers and prospects solve problems and share ideas. They should transform brands and the people behind them into industry thought leaders.

*Communities can even help people
live their lives better.*

But they don't.

Sadly, the harsh reality is that few B2B companies have realized this community nirvana. [REDACTED]

Instead, they've introduced the online equivalent of a walled garden - a cage that fails to stimulate the kind of conversations that are already happening elsewhere on the social web organically.



The bleak reality of communities today

A staggering **70 percent** of proprietary communities are predicted to FAIL.

Source: Gartner

Customer communities are dying at an astounding rate.

Content is outdated. Discussions are uninspired. Members don't contribute.

Sure, there are some effective forums out there that decrease support costs.

- * But they don't engage decision makers and thought leaders
- * They don't ignite the enthusiasm of happy customers who could turn out to be your biggest brand advocates
- * They don't live up to the promise that so many hopeful marketers bought into

The reason is plain for all to see:

Today's branded communities offer participants very little in return for their efforts.

- * No real ties with other community members
- * No social capital boosting their personal or professional brand
- * No indication as to which content is the most interesting or important
- * No pathways to conversations taking place elsewhere on the social web

Compare these communities to the vibrant discussions and debates already taking place in open, independent networks like Quora and Stack Overflow. These examples are more engaging, compelling and fulfilling than their branded B2B community counterparts.

- * Their compelling Q&A format drives more high quality member responses
- * Their democratic upvoting brings the best interactions to the top
- * Their participants earn points or credits for providing great answers
- * Their open format encourages participants to bring quality content from across the social web part into their discussions. Much of the content takes them outside the community.

Is it a surprise that, no matter how hard well-meaning community managers try, these communities are destined to fail?

*** 34% of community leaders surveyed report they have fewer than 100 active members**
Source: Deloitte



B2B communities can ^{and must} be so much more

Tear down those walls. Remove those barriers. Your community isn't just the websites or social profiles you own.

- * A community is people and their **passions**
- * A community is the **conversations** they have with each other
- * A community is the **interactions** they have with you about the things that matter most to their business. And yours.
- * A community is all of these things and more

Do you want your community to flourish? Then you must facilitate the seamless transfer of ideas between your branded properties and everywhere else on the social web.

The time has come to transform the concept of community into the powerful business asset it was meant to be:

- * A medium to build brand preference
- * An avenue to create customer loyalty
- * A gateway to drive leads and sales
- * A conduit to collect customer feedback
- * An opportunity to help customers accelerate their careers

And most of all: a way to keep them coming back.

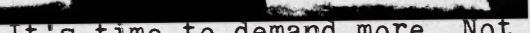
Again and again.

But building this new kind of community is going to take nothing short of a revolution. Today is the day to take a stand and say, **"NO MORE!"**

When you see customers actively engaged on social networks, forums and blogs all over the Web, but silent in your community, something must be done.

When member posts consistently go unanswered by anyone other than your employees, something must be done.

When members receive no motivation, incentives or rewards for their engagement, something must be done.

 It's time to demand more. Not just for yourself, but more importantly for your customers and other community members. It's time you make their experience and desires the real priority.



Advocates: Your best means for radical redefinition of community

and only

In every revolution, there are the intellectuals and there are the partisans. [REDACTED] t.

And those partisans need the power to incite radical change and build a more promising future [REDACTED]

That power is right at your fingertips. For a new kind of community to emerge from today's failures, marketers like you must harness the power of a passionate, vocal majority who are willing to do whatever it takes to support your brand with just a simple ask.

These are your advocates.

- * Advocates promote your brand through social channels [REDACTED]
- * [REDACTED]
- * Advocates sing your praises during industry events
- * Advocates act as references, sounding boards and cheerleaders
- * Advocates fuel case studies, testimonials, online reviews and other critical content

In return for public recognition, the opportunity to be seen as a thought leader, or a simple thank you, your advocates will knock down every challenge you give them in order to become a catalyst for engagement [REDACTED] in your community. With a little encouragement, they'll contribute fresh, relevant content everywhere your customers and prospects live and breathe.



Moving toward a brighter future for communities

Unfortunately, a strategy that effectively channels this advocate enthusiasm hasn't been created. A tool that takes the burden off community managers doesn't exist. A platform that gives back to participants as much as they put in hasn't been developed.

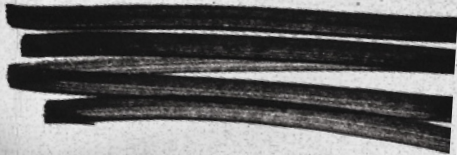
Yet.

Soon, with the help of your advocates, you will have the opportunity to build communities without fear that they will crumble into a pit of customer complaints.

Without fear that community members won't contribute, engage or even visit.

Without fear that investment of time and resources won't generate a return on investment.

Soon, marketers will have access to advocate-powered community strategies and platforms that allow them to forge ahead and build a strong community without fear of failure.





The time for action is **now**

Marketers of the world unite! The time has come to reclaim our online communities. We call on each and every one of you to:

- (1) Work with your colleagues to **identify your most enthusiastic, vocal customers** and recruit them as advocates.
- (2) **Create a strategy** for mobilizing your advocates at scale through an advocate marketing program.
- (3) **Reward and recognize** your advocates with so they'll be motivated to engage with each other in your community on a regular basis and respond to future calls for action.
- (4) **Call on** your advocates to:
 - Keep your community relevant by consistently creating and sharing new content
 - Keep other members engaged and active by responding to and liking their posts promptly and regularly
 - Keep your community vibrant by recruiting and engaging new members who are interested in the same topics
- (5) **Demand better tools** with which to recruit, engage and recognize your advocates and communities everywhere they interact online.

Visit influitive.com to start the revolution today.