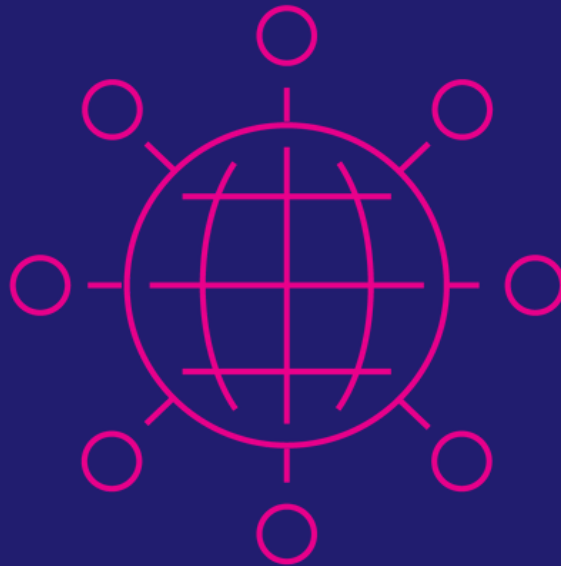




Customer Forums & User Groups

Golden Nuggets



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The Golden Nuggets

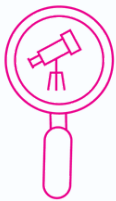
Building and sustaining customer forums and user groups can be an effective way to engage your customers 365 to foster a sense of community, and gather valuable feedback and insights. This will in turn improve retention, and drive the shift to recurring-revenue models.

Ensure that your forums are about your customers, this isn't the time to sell your products, services or solutions, this is the opportunity to really understand their needs, gain feedback and build strong relationships.

Steps to help you create and maintain successful customer forums and user groups

Define the Purpose and Goals

Clearly define the purpose and goals of your customer forum or user group. Is it for troubleshooting, knowledge sharing, product feedback, or general community building? Understand the specific objectives you want to achieve through these platforms.



Select the Right Platform

Choose a suitable platform for hosting your customer forum or user group. Options include dedicated forum software social media groups, or even custom-built solutions. Consider factors like ease of use, scalability, moderation capabilities, and integration with other systems.

Popular platforms include:



Create Guidelines and Policies

Develop clear and concise guidelines and policies for participation in the forum or group. Define rules for behaviour, content posting, moderation, and privacy. Encourage a respectful and inclusive environment where members feel safe and valued.



Seed Quality Content

To kick-start your forum or group, seed it with high-quality content. Create useful and engaging topics, FAQs, tutorials, or discussion threads to encourage participation. This will give members something to interact with when they join.

Encourage Participation

Actively encourage your customers to participate in the forum or user group. Promote it through various channels like email newsletters, social media, your website, or in-app notifications. Consider offering incentives, such as exclusive access to beta programs or discounts, to motivate engagement.

Foster Engagement

Foster engagement within the forum or user group by curating an ongoing agenda of activity, be that through face to face events, forums, informal meetings or regularly posting interesting and relevant content online. Encourage members to share their experiences, ask questions, and provide feedback. Respond promptly to inquiries and participate in discussions to make members feel heard and valued.

Empower Community Leaders

Identify active and knowledgeable community members who can act as moderators or ambassadors. Empower them to help maintain the forum or group, facilitate discussions, and enforce guidelines. Recognize their contributions and provide them with the necessary tools and support.

Gather Feedback

Leverage your customer forum or user group as a valuable source of feedback. Monitor discussions, identify recurring issues or suggestions, and use that feedback to improve your products or services. Actively seek input from the community on new features or initiatives.

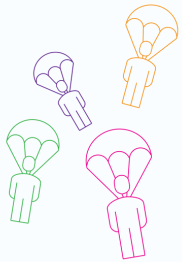
Provide Regular Updates

Keep your forum or group active and vibrant by providing regular updates on new features, product releases, or company news. This will keep members engaged and informed, encouraging them to continue participating.

Continuously Improve

Regularly assess the success and effectiveness of your customer forum or user group. Analyze participation metrics, gather feedback from members, and make adjustments as needed. Continuously iterate and improve your community-building efforts.

Remember, building and sustaining customer forums and user groups require ongoing commitment and effort. By fostering a sense of community and providing value to your customers, you can create a space where they feel connected, supported, and engaged with your brand.

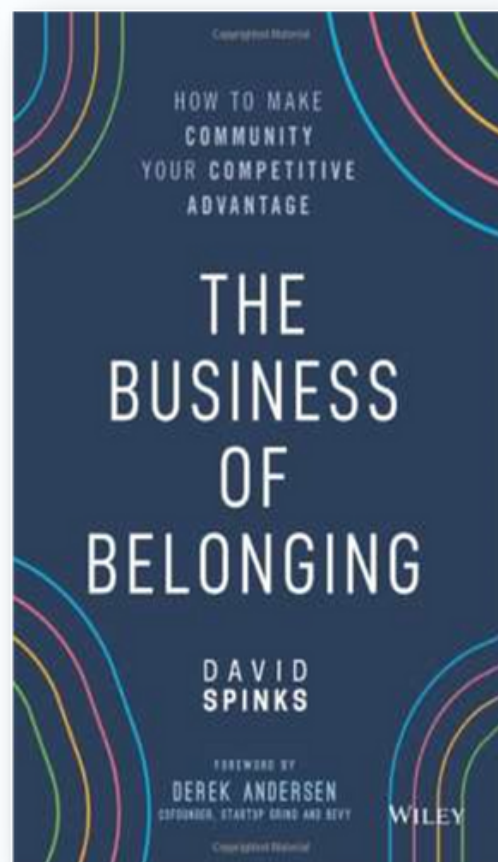




Community Models With The Greatest Chance Of Success

Model	Support	Success	Advocacy	Peer groups	User groups
Value To Members	Spend less effort solving problems	Learn the best techniques	Earn rewards for supporting us	Have conversations you can't have anywhere else	Befriend and collaborate with other users
Critical Success Factors	Large # people with questions	Smart people willing to share expertise	Small # of highly enthusiastic 'brand fans'	Strong sense of privacy and exclusivity	Passionate group leaders
	Small # of highly dedicated people to answer	A large audience to read the knowledge shared	Brand fans creating and sharing the right information	Open and honest sharing	Regular series of popular events
Key Challenge(s)	Persuading people to use community vs. other channels	Creating incentive structure for smart people to share expertise	Giving advocates genuine access and influence	Attracting the right initial members	Identifying and retaining group leaders.
	Motivating people to answer questions	Filtering out poor quality contributions	Creating the right reward structure for advocates	Creating trust between members	Exerting influence without being controlling
	Resolving questions members can't answer	Building an audience to read the expertise shared	Filtering and promoting the best content	Ensuring equal balance of participation	Building systems to scale success
Suitable Platforms	Enterprise forum platforms Social media	Blogs, videos, knowledge base, social media	Advocacy platforms	Group messaging apps Small group platforms	Virtual and in-person event platforms

Recommended Reading



To learn more about how to develop your own customer forum, user group or community contact lisa@dovetailcreative.co.uk