



10 COOL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIPS



A Higher Logic Publication

10 Cool Community Management Tips

Lead by example. Be a champion for your brand and brand's fans. Believe in the community you support and work toward providing value, but also fun. Define and get to know your audience. Build your reputation by helping other people build theirs. It's important to showcase your dedication to the community by engaging your members in a way that encourages discussions and provides a platform for open exchange and knowledge sharing. Remember, people connect with people.

Andy Steggles, President & Chief Customer Officer, Higher Logic



TWEET THIS TIP

1

Hire A Dedicated Community Manager

The success of your community depends on the vital role of a community manager (CM). Whether you hire from within, outside your organization or outsource to an industry partner – your CM is the living, breathing symbol of your community. It's essential that the CM is passionate, cares about your organization, understands key issues, and follows industry trends. Essentially, CMs cultivate relationships and engage with an authentic voice. Listening, creating and curating content, amplifying stories, and responding to users are their core responsibilities. CMs also work with internal teams and user evangelists for further support because community management really is a team effort.

Resource: SocialFish Blog

socialfish.org/2013/05/online-community-manager-job-description.html



Bright Idea: Reporting and building actionable reports is a core responsibility of an active CM. You can use reporting tools to quickly create tables and graphs.



Community Call-Out: Ask your community manager to add a "Community Tip of the Month" widget to your community site homepage. Include an action statement in your tip. For example, remind members to update their address information on their profile page. Provide a direct link to a blog post where you describe the benefit and also give the steps to complete this action. Writing the blog post will also provide content generation for your community that is searchable and referenceable in the future.



2

Create a Tactical Plan

Keep your community site users logging in for more by offering valuable content and conversations. Be a knowledge source by creating a tactical plan for your community just like any of your products or services. Plan out promotions like you do for the editorial calendar in your magazine. You'll enable conversation by mapping out a content game plan every month or every quarter. Think about what's going on in your organization and how the theme of the month or quarter will correlate. Remember that content comes in many mediums which can be repurposed in multiple formats. For example, turn a dialogue thread from a discussion post into a member blog post or an educational article.



Community Call-Out: Consistent content development can be a challenge. Look to your other departments and cross-market. Perhaps your publications department just released the new issue of your publication. Post an article from the magazine in a discussion group and ask your members to weigh in on the issue. In the next issue, ask your publications department to publish snapshots of the discussion thread as a follow up.

Good community management is based on building strong relationships. If you want to have a healthy community, you have to be an active and engaged participant in it. Not as a marketer, not as a promoter, but as a contributor, a conversationalist, and as a listener.

Lauren Wolfe, Interactive Marketing & New Media, Higher Logic



3

Roll Out The Welcome Wagon

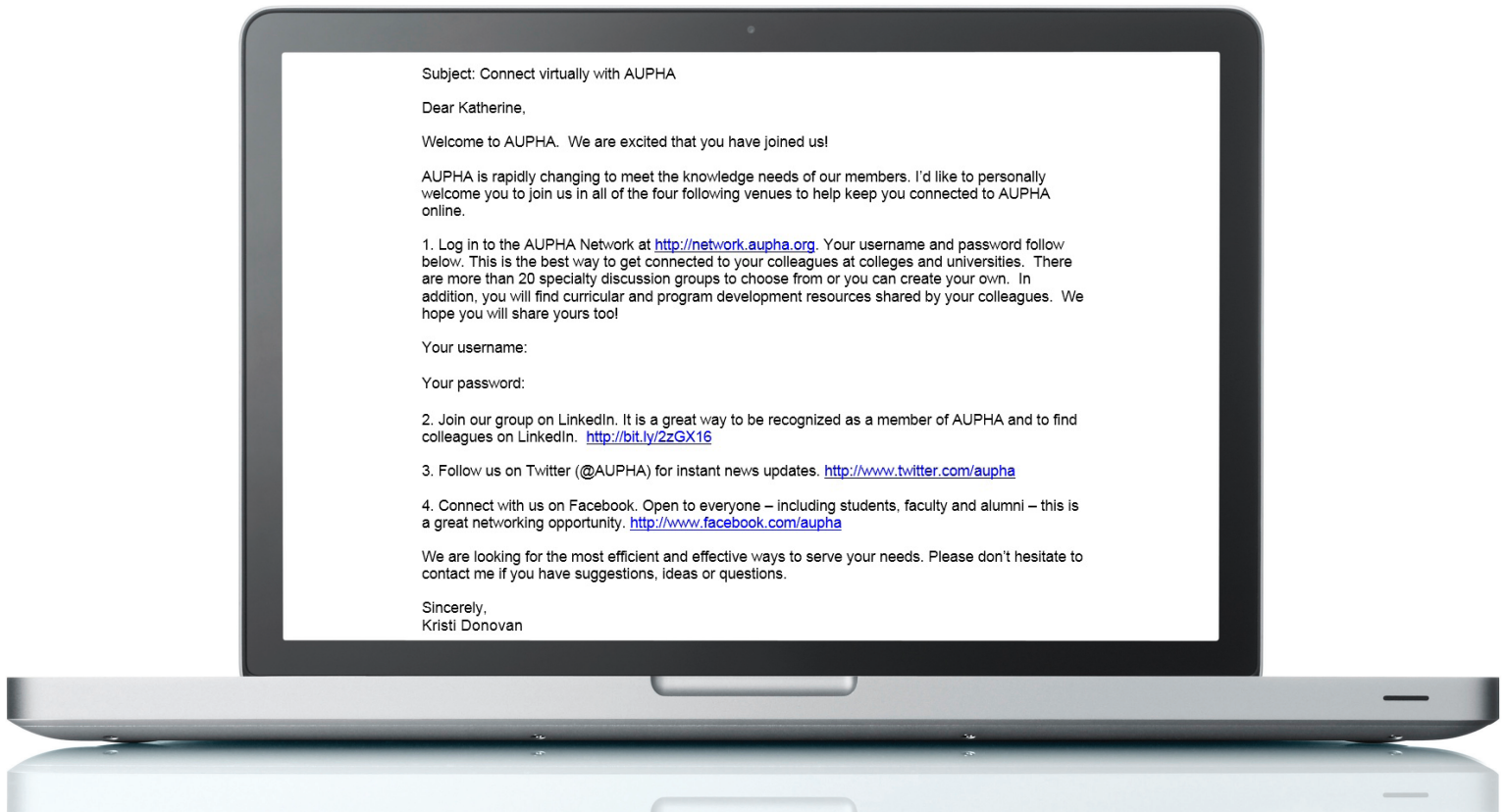
Okay not literally...but as membership organizations have so knowingly learned, welcoming new members to their community site requires a plan of action. Once members join, you want to retain them throughout their professional career. Make members feel welcome to your community site by:

- Including information about your community site in your new member package – letter, benefits brochure, welcome phone call.
- Emailing a community Getting Started Guide to all new members.
- Adding a welcome slide with suggested steps to the slide deck on your community site homepage.
- Producing a community site welcome video from your CEO or VP of Membership.
- Encouraging members to complete their profile by sending a message from within the community.
- Posting an FAQ page on your community site main navigation bar.
- Organizing new member ambassadors and providing them with actionable items to engage new members.
- Auto-subscribing new members to discussion groups of professional interest.
- Hosting quarterly webinars targeted to new members. Hold a live chat for open conversation and answer questions. Then post the webinar recording to your community site for members who couldn't join it live.
- Featuring new members on your community site homepage. Conduct a simple interview and add a professional headshot. Include a teaser of the interview and link to the full interview on another page. Make sure to include a link to connect to that member!

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Example: The Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA)

AUPHA Virtual Welcome Emails | network.aupha.org



Community Call-Out: Create a “New to the Community” page on your community site. Use this page as the dashboard for all things new members would want to know. Make sure the page is benefit-rich and includes many hyperlinks to make finding resources simple.



4

Cross-Pollinate Content and Create a Knowledge Management Culture

Promote your content and the activity on your community site across all communication channels. Your community should be visible everywhere – on your main website, in your publications, even at your in-person events. Conversely, store resources in your community that members must have – communications, committee agendas, advocacy feedback, speaker handouts – and define your community as a knowledge management center.

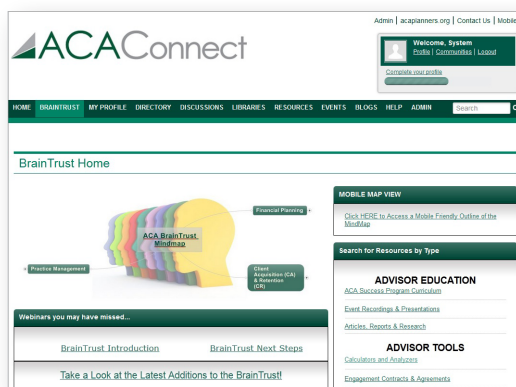
Ignite engagement and spark new ideas by using content from your community site:

- Create a resource destination on your community site with well-organized documents, samples and articles your members need to do their jobs.
- Announce new resource library entries in your next e-newsletter.
- Promote your most active discussions via a RSS feed or an engagement related widget on the homepage of your main website.
- Feature your MVPs in your major print publication.
- Create an email for your members that aggregates the top 5 communities they're not participating in, but should be or the top discussion threads they may have missed.
- Recognize your most active members in an award ceremony at annual conference.

Example: The Brain Trust

Alliance of Cambridge Advisors, Inc. (ACA) | community.acaplanners.org

The Brain Trust Project is about taking ACA's collective knowledge and classifying it, organizing it, filling in the gaps, and making it easily accessible to ACA members.





TWEET THIS TIP

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Promote Facilitated Discussions by Leveraging Industry Experts

Host a facilitated discussion with a subject matter expert on your community site. Start a new discussion group dedicated to hosting all facilitated discussions or leverage your open forum for this if you need to drive more traffic to it. Ask members to login to the community from 2-4 PM. The subject matter expert will post or ask a question to the community. Members can answer or respond with another question in real-time. Debate is okay and you should encourage members to be honest. These dialogue threads will be searchable later and content will be archived on your community site for members to access who were unable to participate live. Keep your content strategy relevant and members will keep coming back for more.

Another idea – post a short video or case study. Ask members to watch or read and post responses or questions. You can feature journal articles, news stories or blog posts. Invite your most engaged members and have your community manager facilitate to ensure questions are answered.

Example: The Health Care Compliance Association (HCCA)

[HCCAnet](#) | community.hcca-info.org

HCCA invites leaders in the compliance industry to be featured as Guest Commentators and to start discussion threads. Each Guest Commentator addresses critical issues facing the compliance profession for an entire week. A new discussion topic is posted daily to their most popular group, “Chief Compliance Ethics Officer Network.” Each day the Guest Commentator responds to the previous day’s comments and presents a new discussion topic. The Guest Commentator generated discussions typically generate many new discussions on the HCCA social network. Furthermore, the discussions are cross posted to LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter which encourages new members to get involved in HCCA’s private social network.



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Example: American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination (AANAC) –
Discussions in Action Infographic
AANAC Connect | connect.aanac.org

AANAC Connect

DISCUSSIONS IN ACTION

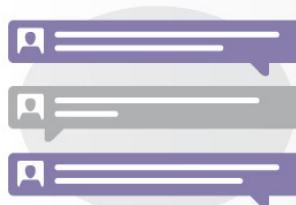
AANAC had the speaker and three additional expert panelists log in to their connected community (AANAC Connect) directly following the webinar. The duration of the post-webinar discussion was 60 minutes. They pulled over some questions that weren't answered during the normal Q and A of the webinar and the conversations started immediately. **They had great engagement and here are the stats:**



1 SPEAKER
3 PANEL EXPERTS



60
minute
webinar



29
THREADS

(a new thread was started every two minutes!)

282 
people

**were invited to join
the discussion
(all webinar attendees)**



33%

**of the unique
authors noted
it was their
first post in the
community ever!**

86 posts

(this doubles the daily
posts we get in our largest
discussion group — and that
was in 60 minutes!)

24 unique authors,
which pulled
8% of attendees

Community Managers (CM) know the value of community, but do you belong to a community built for CM's? It's a must! Start by building a strong network of CMs as resources. This community should be a place where CM leaders share stories and discuss challenges as well as celebrate successes.

Heather McNair, Director of Client Success, Higher Logic



6

Measure Return on Engagement (ROE) & Reward Most Valuable Professionals (MVPs)

Return on engagement (ROE) is the new return on investment (ROI) in the community management world. ROE is the metric tied to the time and investment spent participating and interacting with your community. First define measureable goals. You can start by measuring participation, contributions, influence and sentiment. Next, use that data collected to form your content plan, structure your posts and design future engagement contests. Use the information found to recommend appropriate site analytics, optimize tactics and response plans. Lastly, acknowledge that conversion may take time, but focus on the opportunity to connect with your membership. Lurkers will lurk, and that is okay. The goal is to ask members to act, and when they do, prompt them to ask other members to act.

Naturally, you'll want to recognize your most valuable professionals (MVPs). We all know members like to be acknowledged! Encourage competition and reward success. Here are some prize ideas:

- Create new volunteer leader positions. (example: Community Champion)
- Give community champions a sneak peak of new community features – keep them in the know.
- Provide a special conference badge ribbon or pin exclusively for MVPs.
- Send branded coffee mugs to MVPs. You can keep your community name in front of them, and give them something valuable at the same time.
- Feature user stories on your community site homepage or in your print publication. Give MVPs their own column and perhaps add an interview for additional content.
- Recognize MVPs at your annual meeting awards ceremony.



Bright Idea: You can use traditional methods like polls and surveys to get results. Create an engagement poll widget for your community site homepage. Ask a simple question – how do you prefer to receive communications from our organization? This might tell you something you didn't know. If most of your members prefer mobile, you will need to consider how your content reads on mobile. Also, by tracking ROE, CMs will see and identify what does and doesn't work. Document findings and keep on hand for future campaigns and investment of resources.

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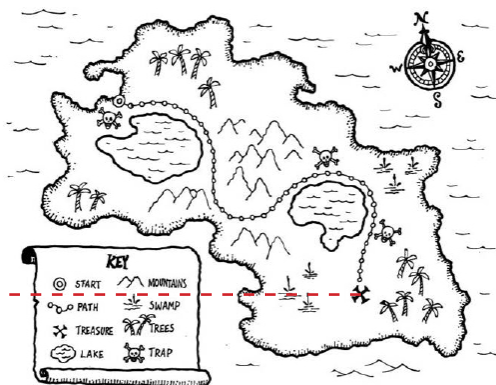
Host a Connection Contest

Create a game your members will want to play! Hold a connection contest via your community site at your next in-person event to encourage members, supporters and partners (anyone with access) to explore what's inside of your community site. Try an online Community Scavenger Hunt. Give members a mission, a list of challenges and an explanation of the game. Have fun with the concept...create a theme and of course offer a treasure. Have your CM give clues throughout the challenge list to keep the game fun.

Ask your members to take actions that explore the features and benefits of your community site. Here are some thoughts to spark challenge ideas...ask players to:

- Find and download the Community Scavenger Hunt Question Sheet in the Resource Library. This is where players will find the game clues!
- Establish four new member connections.
- Read a new blog post and make a comment or rate the post.
- Use the search to locate a specific discussion posting. Require them to subscribe to the group and reply to the posting.
- Update their profile by importing content from LinkedIn. Remind them to review the accuracy of their member profile – specifically their contact information.
- Find the community manager using the member directory and send the community manager a message saying "mission complete." This allows you to easily see who has done what and when.

The last clue leads to the treasure or as pirates say, "booty", so make it a good one! Complete the Community Scavenger Hunt and win the game when all the missions are complete. Consider offering a series of prizes. Ask sponsors or partners to make donations to the "booty." Promote the Community Scavenger Hunt and word of mouth (WOM) buzz by adding new digital ribbons to all player profiles.





8

Be a Delegation & Networking Ninja

Community management is more than a full-time job. Look to your team, network and members to delegate projects. Create a cross-departmental task force that participates in the development of the community and the nurturing of community conversation. This task force can also provide content and/or assist with content curation.

Can you identify a member who makes valuable comments on the most discussion group postings? Give your most engaged members and community advocates training, guidelines and responsibilities. Add perks for participation as an extra reward and incentive for the extra work. Return on engagement (ROE) aside, community management is about connecting a group of people by making them feel like they're a part of something special. No matter what tactic you use or tool you choose to carry out that tactic, keep your focus on what motivates the people at the core of the community you're trying to build.

Partner with community management professionals. Hire an external community manager (CM) to work as an extension of your team to make sure your community is set for success. Higher Logic works collaboratively with the best and brightest industry partners who provide a variety of community management services including:

- Strategy
- Brand representation
- Idea generation
- Listening and member response
- Moderation and motivation
- Content curation and planning
- Social feedback and management
- Crowd sourcing
- Analytics and reporting



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Create Clear Community Codes of Conduct

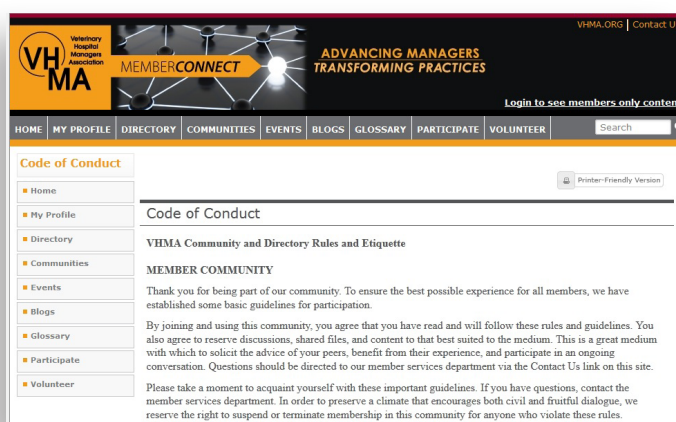
Have you developed and adopted a Community Code of Conduct for your community site? Community Codes of Conduct are important to any online community and are essentially the rules of engagement. A code of conduct gives your community a direction and helps define its culture.

Even if you feel as though no one ever reads the rules, you should have the conversation with your team (staff, volunteer leaders, and the board), decide on the guidelines and post the code on your community site. There are many templates to work from, but make sure to customize the built in Community Code of Conduct to reflect the language and tone of your organization. Take the time to write a code of conduct that embodies the spirit of the community you're seeking to create. Consider providing the code in several readable formats – a short version, a long version and a full version. For example, the short version could just list the key principles in a bulleted point list with quick links that quickly direct the reader to a particular section of interest. Ideally your Community Code of Conduct should be integrated with existing policies and codes of conduct related to website usage and/or network access. Also, a code of conduct should have a caveat that the code may be changed at any time.

A Community Code of Conduct cannot eliminate all the risk by itself. However, if a properly written code is well implemented together with appropriate training, then legal risks will be mitigated. Perhaps record a short video that explains the code or add a slide deck image all about the advantages of reading the code. You can always refer members to the code whenever the need arises. This shouldn't be often, typically communities police themselves – members only tolerate professional engagement.

Example: The Veterinary Hospital Managers Association (VHMA)

VHMA Code of Conduct/Rules and Etiquette Policy Sample
memberconnect.vhma.org



10

Celebrate Your Community Site's Birthday

You celebrate the launch of your community site...but do you celebrate its birthday or one year anniversary? It's important to re-visit the launch concept and consider planning a birthday celebration event. Your community site's birthday is something that should be celebrated with not only your members, but with everyone who uses your site – your team, partners and sponsors. To help create an event plan, here are some ideas to get everyone in the celebrating spirit:



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- Plan for a week-long celebration with daily activities.
- Kick off your celebration with a birthday cake!
- Announce your most active members for the year. Invite them for cake, an earned sweet treat.
- Create an infographic that includes important (and fun) community activity stats.
- Post a video on your community site homepage from your executive director or community manager announcing the week of celebration and what members can expect.
- Decorate your community site homepage! Consider changing the color scheme for the week and designing a new slide deck image.
- Feature a spread in your print publication.
- Send members a birthday card or anniversary postcard.
- Create an anniversary edition t-shirt and hand out at your annual meeting. Consider giving out exclusively at a booth set up for your community site.
- Ask members to take action and submit their highlight or best community moment. Provide an aggregate of ideas on your homepage.



Bright Idea: There are many reasons to celebrate building an online community for your membership. Write this down – Community Manager Appreciation Day (CMAD) takes place the 4th Monday of January every year. CMAD is a way to recognize and celebrate the efforts of community managers around the world using social media and other tools to improve customer experiences.





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