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Introduction

Community managers know: building and managing a community is an enormous task. With so many topics and audiences to consider, it can seem like there just aren't enough hours in a day to get all the important things done.

Community managers are cross functional, meaning their responsibilities span from marketing to product management to providing support. They are firefighters, dealing with public and private negative feedback. They gather and share insight with product management, recruit members for beta testing, introduce new members to existing ones, answer questions, organize events... the list goes on.

That's a lot of work. How do we know if it's paying off? By paying attention to who else is talking. One of the key success indicators in a community is member participation – and the fuel is having things to actually talk about. Unfortunately, this challenge is too often met by creating a cornucopia of original pieces on a nearly daily basis – causing a heavy workload and big headache for the community manager.

There's an easy way to reduce the constant hardship of creating brand new content, and give the new content you do create a longer shelf-life: content curation. This ebook offers nine tactical solutions you can implement right away to ease this burden, so you can focus on the things that matter most to your organization.





Content curation helps you compete effectively and efficiently, and provides unique benefits critical in today's market. Adding content curation to the mix delivers many benefits:

Improves Search Engine Optimization: Curated content becomes additional indexable pages that provide more doorways into your site via search engines.

Establishes Credibility as a Thought Leader: Curated content from high quality third-party sources helps you develop go-to web resources that improve your credibility and trustworthiness as an impartial authority on your topic.

Supports Lead Generation: Curated content drives incremental site visits that increases the potential for landing quality leads.

Streamlines Lead Nurturing: Curated content is easily repurposed via newsletters, emails and other channels to make lead nurturing simple and consistent.

Complements Your Community and Blog: Curated content supplements your social media publishing schedule and helps facilitate social media conversations—not only with prospects and customers, but also with peers.





Delivering the Right Content to the Right Audience at the Right Time

Regardless of your title or position in the company, there are two fundamental marketing principles at the core of community management success, and they are:

- The Right Content to the Right Audience: Delivering the right message to the right person
- 2. The Right Time: The position of the community within the buyer's journey or purchasing lifecycle

Establishing Your Community Audience

Identifying your ideal audience comes with understanding the type of community you manage – but it's not always so cut and dried.

As you read through this list, you may find that your community encompasses more than one type. There are no hard and fast rules to this, but knowing will help you establish the types of content that will help build that all-important momentum within your community.

Each community type is defined by their purpose and the composition of their membership.

Types of Communities

Purpose: Members share the same objective, either to bring about social change, or to rally around a common cause. Good examples are LGBTQ groups fighting for equality, women's rights, climate change, etc.

Circumstance: Driven by position, circumstance or life experiences. Sometimes these communities are action-oriented to change the shared circumstances. Examples are illness support groups, such as the Breast Cancer Network of Australia or life event groups like The Knot for newly engaged couples.





Inquiry: Driven by research and inquiry, to drive innovation and new understanding, these communities are scholarly in nature. Examples include research associations and developer communities like Oculus, Cireson and Harvard.

Interest: Driven by a shared interest, passion, hobby or activity. Examples include cooking communities like Big Green Egg with their BBQ enthusiast community, Rinker Boats for boaters and Penny Arcade for gamers.

Place: Driven by location; usually where members reside, work, visit or otherwise spend a continuous portion of their time. Examples include tourism boards like the Visit Scotland community.

Practice: Driven by interest in a craft or profession. Professional associations such as AAT (Association of Accounting Technicians) fit in here.

Your community will probably encompass two or more of these categories. That's okay, it's totally normal to go broad and take on more than one category. A good example of this is The Breast Cancer Network of Australia. It's a community of circumstance and also a community of place. Although the very core of the community is the circumstance – and cancer is obviously a worldwide issue – this specific community is focused on serving just the Australian community.

It's important to remember, too, that communities don't have to be static in their core objectives. For example, a support community for a technology product (a community of inquiry) can become a community of practice by adding sections and content that help members grow on a professional level.

The point is, communities change and transform over time. Nurture yours to evolve.





Let's Talk About Curated Content

In a nutshell, curated content is defined as articles, blog posts, rich media and social statuses of a particular interest that have been carefully selected, organized and shared with a network to accomplish a specific goal.

It's important to emphasize here that there is an intentionality behind what content is chosen and how it is organized, presented and distributed.

It can be helpful to think of content curation as you think of museum curation. A museum curator does not haphazardly display random pieces of art in any medium or style from any time period or artist. Instead, a talented curator considers themes, perspectives, techniques, time and more, and arranges the artwork accordingly to tell a story. In this same fashion, the content you curate should also support and complement the story your brand wants to tell.

Misconceptions

First, let's clear up a few common misconceptions people have about curated content that make them hesitate to include it in their content strategy.

Some people believe that curated content is a replacement for engagement, meaning they post content just to post content, and think that's all there is to it. That's lazy curation, and just adds to the noise. On the flip side, carefully curated content serves as a stepping stone for even more engagement. It gives people something to springboard conversations off of.

Another common misconception is that sharing third-party content is **unethical**, but it's only unethical if you claim that content as your own. You can avoid this by giving credit where credit is due and even tagging or linking to the original source, fulfilling one of the goals of the original writer.





Probably the biggest misconception is that sharing curated content drives traffic away from your site, never to return. It may seem a little backwards sending traffic away from your site, but in actuality, curating helpful, relevant resources demonstrates your commitment to your community's needs and interests. Instead of spending hours finding that content on their own, you're offering a tailored service just for them and they will associate the quality of that content with you, the brand that served it to them. Being a consistent well of useful and relevant information positions you as a trusted, go-to expert.

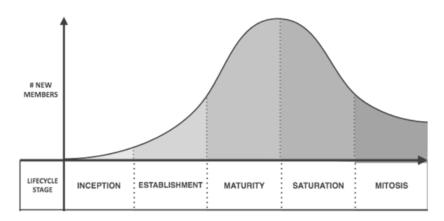




Determining the Right Time Based on Lifecycle



THE ONLINE COMMUNITY LIFECYCLE



Our friends at Feverbee have come up with the online community lifecycle and its five stages. In what follows, we'll cover these different phases and provide examples of types of content you can use for each.

But again, these aren't hard and fast rules; you can use all types of content, regardless of the phases. Use what feels right for YOUR unique community.

The Right Content for Inception

In the Inception stage of the Community Lifecycle, it is imperative that community managers lay the foundation for what your community will do and who it will serve. Your primary goals in this stage are to invite members to join and keep them engaged, initiate discussions and prompt members to participate, and build relationships with members.

Curated content helps to get people's buy-in when they aren't so familiar with your original content just yet. Mix in content that educates members on the problem that exists in your space, supports the mission statement of your community, and lays the foundation for the original content and actions your brand will talk about within the community.





Wearwell

To illustrate, let's look at Wearwell, an ethical subscription box brand. They're in the early stages of building a community that deeply cares about sustainable, eco-friendly, fair trade fashion accessible for all. In Spring 2017, they launched their Indiegogo campaign, raising 173% of their target goal.

On their Instagram account, they curate quotes and third-party content from other brands and individuals who are already doing great things in the ethical shopping space. They discuss related topics, such as consciousness, to build awareness, form connections with those who already support those brands and educate newcomers on why their mission is important and what they hope to accomplish together.







shopwearwell Loving this reminder from our friends at @besdandreel: Don't forget your power. If you want to protect the environment, shop that way. If you want to empower women, shop that way. If you want to strengthen your local community, shop that way if you want to strengthen your local community, shop that way if you want to strengthen your local community, shop that way if you want to strengthen your local community, shop that way if you want to strengthen your local community, shop that way if you may be image via @goodonyou.app shopwearwell #ethicalfashion #sustainable!Ifstyle #sustainable #ecochic #ecowarrior #conscious/doset #fashionrevolution #fashionrevoluti

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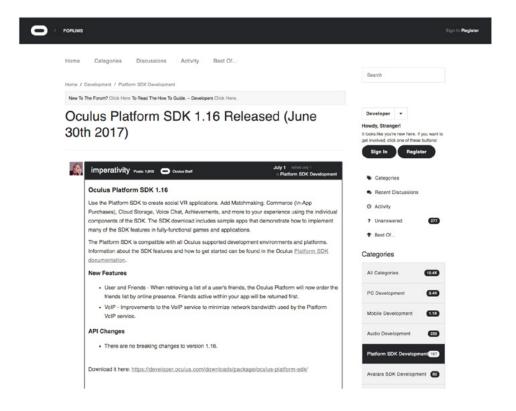




Oculus

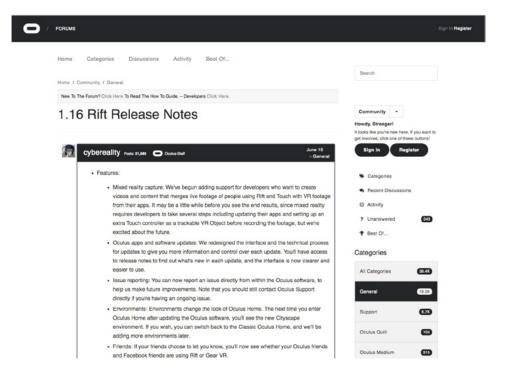
Another great example is Oculus. For those of you unfamiliar with the brand, they are the creators of premium virtual reality gaming gear.

Oculus' success depends on highly anticipated and well reviewed games, like Star Trek Bridge Crew. The bottom line is that if they don't have games, the console won't sell. Therefore, their community caters to two core audiences: developers that build games for their virtual reality platform and players that use their virtual reality headsets.









What we see here is a prime example of internally curated content, repositioned based on audience.

These release notes are sourced from Oculus' Product Management team, and they use their community to share the update details. Notice it's the same release being discussed, just explained and adapted to each audience. Usually, product management and marketing will be the ones writing the content, so it's just a matter of sharing the notes directly to the intended audience.

Driving Insights to Capture Interest

A key goal during the inception stage is to capture interest and be seen as the hub for knowledge on the topics that really matter to your community.

A great way to accomplish this in the Inception stage is by sharing relevant news. Ask yourself:

- What's going on right now that deals directly with the solution you provide?
- What new trends are emerging in your space and what are people saying about it?
- What content are current and trusted thought leaders publishing and sharing?





Ideas on formatting insights for maximum output

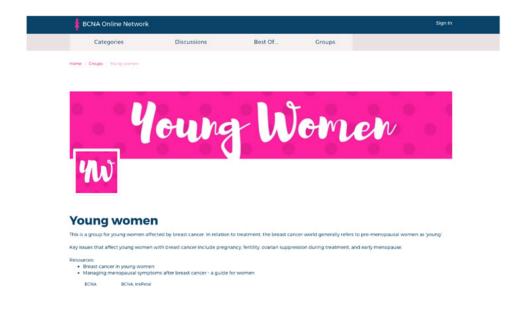
Periodical Recaps

Done daily, weekly or monthly (but really no less than that), the recap brings together relevant discussions in your space. Use content created and curated by your own members and add in third-party sourced information.

By building value consistently, your members will view your community and its recap as an important, timely and reliable source of relevant information for them. It will have a strong pull effect over time.

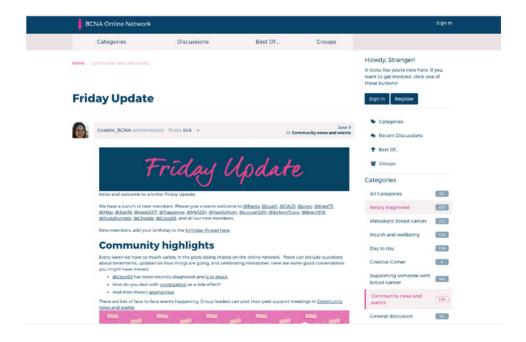
The Breast Cancer Network of Australia

The Breast Cancer Network of Australia leverages periodical roundups of existing content as a form of content curation. They distribute it in two ways.









Through their groups, they offer content specifically niched to the audience, like Young Women, fighting breast cancer. On the other end, they do a weekly Friday update, where they round up and highlight all community discussions, upcoming local events and relevant news.

Polycount

Another great example is Polycount. Polycount also does a round up, this time monthly, that showcases their member's designs. Their followers love it when their art is selected for the spotlight, especially with this very talented crowd!









The Right Content for Establishment

The Establishment stage is focused on building community around the niche interests identified in the Inception stage. In order to start recruiting new members and strengthen the current community, it's important to prioritize writing content about the community.

Package this content so that members can easily share information about your mission, then organize regular events and activities to keep the momentum going. Collect and analyze data about what's working and what isn't in your community, and hone in on referral tactics that your audience resonates with.

One of the best ways to make progress on these priorities is by building consistency in your systems and processes. For example, perhaps you post a curated article every Monday and Thursday or you host a chat around a blog post every Wednesday. Perhaps you assign some of your members as administrators and give them specific tasks each week or month. You might be surprised by how willing your members are to take charge and ownership of their piece of a mission they care deeply about.

Nonprofit Happy Hour Facebook Group

This Facebook group is a peer support community for nonprofit professionals (almost 30k) where members can ask questions, share important information, and provide and receive advice on challenges they face.

Even in their group description, they demonstrate a well-organized process for moderating, having appointed specific members to facilitate and monitor the group. It's clear that these members have specific tasks to do on a weekly

basis, making it possible for the group to thrive.

 If you want to remain anonymous, please contact one of these Anonymators, who have taken the Oath of Confidentiality. They will post on your behalf. You can contact any of them, but to split the work, they have different days:

Laura Beall (Monday)
Remy Etienne LeBarr (Tuesday)
Marcie Timmerman Mha (Wednesday)
Tracey Swanson (Thursday)
Valerie Johnson (Friday)
Sue Goganian (Saturday)
Sarah Wahn-Williams (Sunday)

- If you plan to quote comments from this group (such as for a blog or article), even if you don't mention this group or specific individuals by name, check in and ask for permission.
- Let's have a good sense of humor and be patient with one another, since we all make mistakes



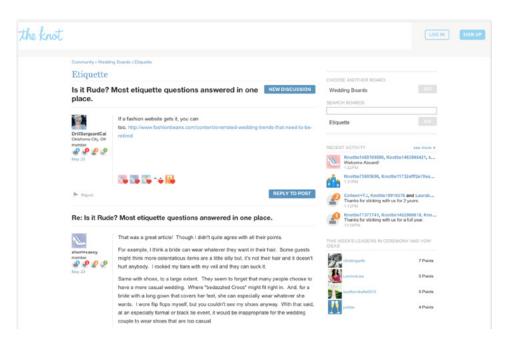


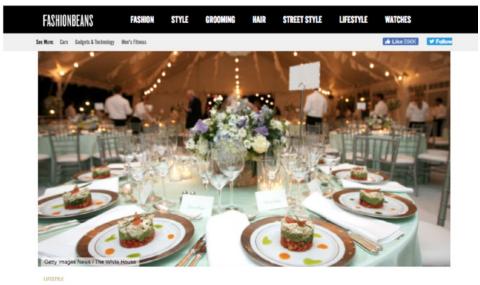


Wedding Etiquette example of content curation.

Another great example of an Establishment tactic is the use of content curation to help provide value and engage members in a discussion. Each content piece, albeit a link, ebook, video, etc., can be used to engender a discussion between members, driving engagement and ultimately, a favorable view of your brand.

Of course, moderation is required if the discussion falls into a negative tone.





16 Overrated Wedding Trends That Need To Be Retired





The Right Content for Maturity and Saturation

A mature community is one that has an established following and members that contribute on a regular basis. These members invest in the community through their content and responses to newer members. To boost loyalty and reward contributions, curate their user-generated content – discussions, responses and shared third-party references – while giving them full credit for their contributions. Giving these precious members exposure to a wider audience is incredibly valuable and cements their status as a subject matter expert.

Platforms that offer gamification and rewards further encourage continuous participation. Systems that balance intrinsic (sharing, upvotes, reactions) and extrinsic (ranks, badges, medals, etc) rewards help accelerate the growth of your community.

#BufferChat

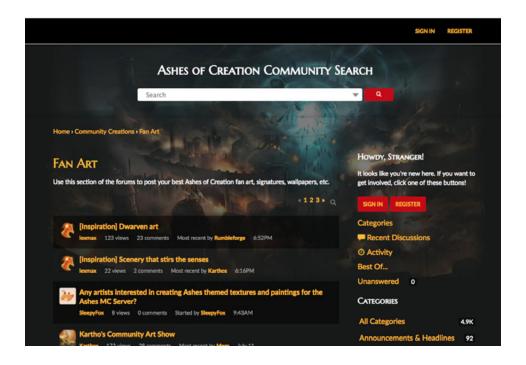
Buffer hosts a popular weekly Twitter chat and invites guests from their online community to co-host, boosting loyalty and excitement around their own impact. They also curate the top responses and most helpful resources mentioned during the chat in a weekly roundup on their blog, tagging each contributor and turning them into micro-influencers. The Twitter chats themselves use gamification to encourage participation, challenging participants to use brevity in their replies and to reply in a timely fashion to keep up with the fast-moving conversation. Hosts often retweet or reply to the participants, making them feel seen and heard.

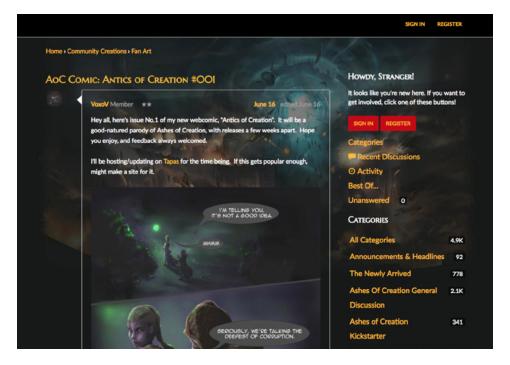




Ashes of Creation

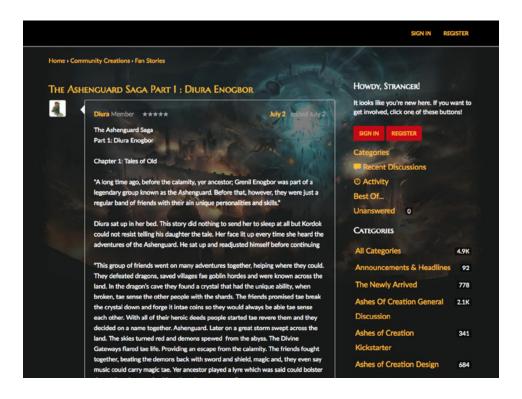
Ashes of creation is a Massively Multiplayer Online game (MMO) by Intrepid games. The game is driven by the community and their fan base is ideal for player created content. They have a section in their community dedicated to Community Creations and include Fan Art, Fan Fiction and Fan Sites to make sure everyone feels heard.

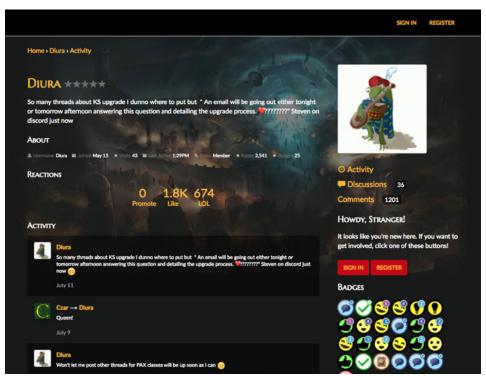














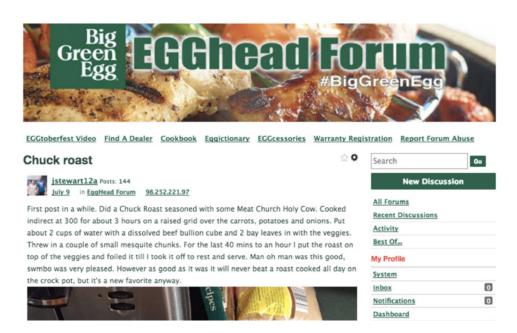


Community-solicited content

Don't be afraid to ask your members to share how they use your products or services, or how they tackle a specific issue or challenge. Their insights are a valuable source of group knowledge.

In the examples below from Little Guy Trailers and Egghead Forum, we see how giving community members the opportunity to provide content about how they use your product can create a feeling of belonging, driving engagement. It can be an ongoing process that helps bring members closer to the brand.









The Right Content for Mitosis

Strong communities in the Mitosis stage often necessitate the need for sub groups, where people can self-select and learn quickly about important topics under the larger umbrella mission.

To create smaller, more intimate communities within these subgroups, introduce specialized content so that members can access and converse around even more specific interests. Curate content that administrators of these groups can select from to spark individual conversations, empowering and equipping these leaders to take ownership of their roles and responsibilities.

When curating for this stage, seek content that challenges your members' perspectives and helps them grow personally and professionally. Remember, these are the people who are loyal and in it for the long haul. Help them grow and they, in turn, will help your community continue to thrive.

Humans of Online Business Facebook Group

"Infopreneur" Regina from byRegina.com hosts a FB group called Humans of Online Business where nearly 10k members share and learn how to run humanized online businesses without the spammy pitches that too often litter these kind of communities.

Founder Regina and moderator Allie provide regular free trainings, share curated links and encourage members to share their own work. They ask for feedback, post individual threads on subtopics that challenge typical business perspectives and encourage community members to think outside of the box on how they want to run their businesses. They take this group seriously and are hiring (yes, hiring!) even more administrators that will continue to honor the mission of the group.







Reviving a Quiet Community

When you think of your community, do you hear crickets? Don't despair. If your community has gone quiet, it doesn't mean you need to close up shop. Take this opportunity to use content to get members to re-engage.

Here are some ways content can revive your community:

- Introduce a fresh, new (perhaps even controversial) piece of content to get members to weigh in and share their opinion.
- Highlight content that community members have created themselves to encourage them to engage in conversation.

Use throwbacks to previously shared content

"Throwback content" are nostalgia pieces that look back on the great content that helped define the community as it grew – from the last few days to a few years ago.

Common themes are "Throwback Thursday" or :Flashback Friday", or in the case of the Comic Geek Speak example below, providing a monthly opportunity for users to share their comic book reading list.





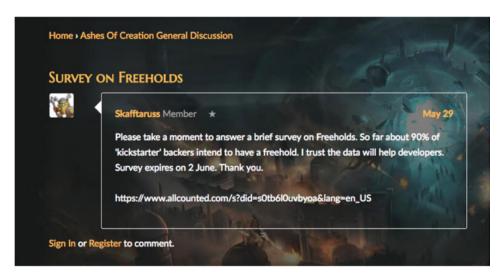
Run a quick survey

Surveying your membership – and notifying them that a survey is being conducted – is a great way to get quick feedback for improvements. Personally reach out to key individuals, asking them to respond to a discussion and telling them why you think they are perfectly suited to answer.





This Ashes of Creation example outlines how implementing a survey shows the community that you're listening to their opinions. Oftentimes, the survey also brings people back, as they're curious to see the results on important questions.



But Where Do I Find Content to Curate?

The quick answer: from inside your own organization! Look to marketing, support, sales, customer communications and product management for the following content:

- Marketing hunt down blogs, product release notes, newsletters, ebooks, webinars, videos and other collateral
- · Sales dive into the goldmine of customer questions
- Customer Communications repurpose newsletters, announcements and event write-ups
- Product Management content like how-tos and release notes are golden opportunities to engage your community members.

Other great sources for curating content are:

- Search engines
- News alerts (Google Alerts, Talkwalker)
- Through your network and community
- Content curation platforms (like UpContent!)





Closing Thoughts

When you fuel your community with curated conversation pieces, you accomplish these other important goals, too:

- Curation boosts SEO by creating a web of links between sites. When you
 link to someone else's work, that source will oftentimes return the favor if they
 notice their work has been shared (so be sure to tag them or let them know
 how useful their piece was!).
- Curation keeps your community fresh with new content on a regular basis, reducing the stress and workload of having to create 100% original content every single time.
- Curation builds relationships with influencers who may be interested in joining or promoting your community, since they already have a shared interest.
 You never know what bridges you are building!

With some strategic planning, community managers can use curated content to give their communities life, freeing up precious time and resources to be better used elsewhere. Though these fearless leaders have much to manage, prioritizing content will keep these organizations active, engaging and growing.

We want to see your communities in action! Tag @vanilla and @getupcontent on Twitter and share how you're using content to keep your community alive.



VANILLAFORUMS.COM 1-866-845-0815 SALES@VANILLAFORUMS.COM

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