

4 ROADS

Online Community:
A SOLUTION FOR THE
SHORT & LONG TERM



WHAT IS AN ONLINE COMMUNITY?

Online communities are an integrated suite of modern community applications such as forums, blogs, wikis, ideation, media galleries, and calendars, with a fully customisable user interface.

Customer communities have grown in popularity because they bring people together around a common interest, cause, profession or product.

People love to talk to each other about the things that matter to them and a community gives people a space to tell stories, share experiences and grow their passions, and to help each other out.

“The most important thing is to be authentic in what you do and how you do it, at all times.”

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WHY ARE ONLINE COMMUNITIES IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW?



Staying connected with
your customer base



Connecting customers
with each other



Providing an additional
support resource

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“In a world of algorithms, hashtags and follows, know the importance of true human connections.”

STAYING CONNECTED WITH YOUR CUSTOMER BASE

In the coming months and beyond, brand communities will become an even bigger source of comfort, and a powerful way to stay connected with customers.

They bring down the barriers and foster intimacy and connection with the goal of reducing isolation. Now more than ever, people are looking for a place they belong and communities provide it.

Considering how consumers are turning to online spaces more than ever, an online community could easily become your single biggest asset during this crisis and beyond.



CONNECTING CUSTOMERS WITH EACH OTHER

Even as we isolate ourselves, we still need to connect with each other about the things that matter to us. A community makes it easy for members to tell their stories, share their experiences and indulge in their passions

It's a source of comfort and a space for customers to stay connected through their shared interests, making it a great opportunity to draw positive attention to your brand without immediately trying to sell a product or service.

PROVIDING A SUPPORT RESOURCE

It's no surprise customer service teams all over the world are struggling to deal with the unprecedented demand for their assistance. Call centres have been forced to close for the safety of their staff, leaving customers no option but to wait hours, days, and even weeks for a response.

What if there was a customer support channel that cut down the number of support tickets and delivered faster answers, without relying on overloaded customer service teams?

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“Building a community is a reflection of a company's customer service mindset.”

It exists, and it's entirely powered by a network of users who volunteer their time and knowledge to help other users. Together they contribute to what's known as a customer community.

It's how customers help customers and removes a lot of the strain from your customer service team.

The brands with a customer community will be in a stronger position to deal with their customers issues without giving overwhelmingly negative experiences, helping to ensure business continuity isn't affected beyond repair.



WHAT
PROBLEMS DO
COMMUNITIES
SOLVE LONG-
TERM?

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Humans reps are busy



Customer churn



Customers don't have a
voice

HUMAN REPS ARE BUSY: CUSTOMERS SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS

This isn't just a solution for the short-term. One of the biggest advantages of having an online community is that customers can quickly self-solve their problems without clogging up your more expensive manned support channels.

That's the cool thing about a community: there's often no larger source of knowledge about your product than your customer base.

Customers use products in all sorts of unexpected ways and have experience with all kinds of use cases and scenarios. The ability to tap into that and add it to your support channels can take the pressure off human-manned channels.

On a platform that archives discussions, people can search for conversations where others have already worked through their problems. If they can't find an answer, they can ask the community a new question and have topic experts answer.

This is textbook Intelligent Self-Service. It's a better, quicker experience for them, and having customers helping customers reduces your support costs.

55% OF CONSUMERS SAY EASY ACCESS TO SUPPORT AND INFORMATION CAN MAKE THEM FALL IN LOVE WITH A BRAND.*

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“The biggest communities young people now reside are online communities.”

CUSTOMER CHURN

Typically, customers can and will answer queries posted in the forum long before support reps can get to it. Even if their problem isn't solved right away, the time to first response drops dramatically and de-escalates frustration before a customer feels let down.

Once customers become active in the community, the distance between them and your brand decreases and this increases a sense of partnership and loyalty.

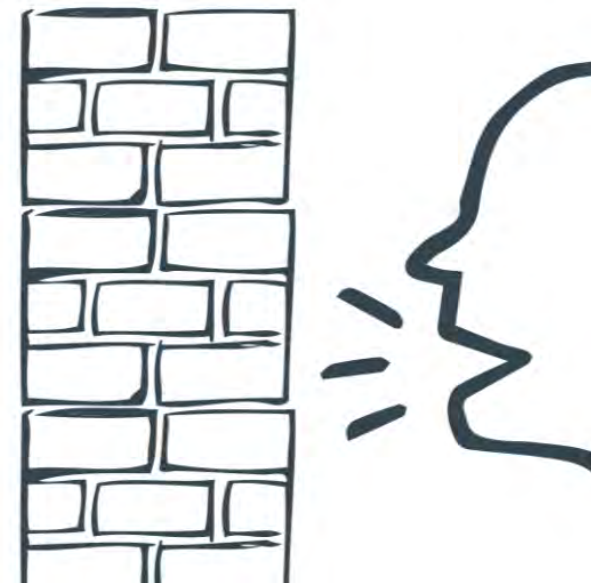
In fact, this is one of the best ways to turn customers into brand advocates because you're ensuring your community consistently adds value to the lives of your customer base.

CUSTOMERS DON'T HAVE A VOICE

Everyone wants to feel like they have been heard, especially when they have a problem to solve. This is why using a community as a support resource can help keep customers on your side. It's somewhere they have a voice.

By inviting them to share their expertise and knowledge in your community, you inspire them to get involved and enable connections that are meaningful and helpful. You're breaking down the traditional one-way exchange of information and making customers feel like a partner.

Consumers want a seat at the table, meaning it's the brands who help customers feel heard who will win long-term loyalty.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITIES IS SOARING

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Throughout this difficult time your customers may be finding things difficult and struggling to cope. Online communities offer them the chance to connect with each other and your brand.

It draws positive attention to your brand, is a source of comfort and a great way to stay connected with customers during this crisis and beyond.

Having built 100+ communities, we know how powerful they can be, but as we all turn to online spaces to connect with the people in our lives, it's becoming clearer to everyone how important these types of connections are.

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“If your brand doesn't have a community plan, you could be missing the opportunity to turn frustrated customers into loyal fans.”

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YOUR COMMUNITY UP AND RUNNING

Developing a community is typically a long-term goal, so it's important to work with a partner who understands your goals, your customer journey and your customer experience.

That's why for over a decade, 4 Roads and our community partners have been committed to helping new communities thrive.

Stick your flag in the ground and say;

"A community is how we help our customers through this difficult period, and how we come out the other side in a stronger position."

Learn more about how 4Roads can configure your community by requesting a community demo.



[Request A Community Demo](#)