

# Social Media for Business: Online Communities



## So What. Whats the Point?

- Connecting fans with each other
- More interactions = More word-of-mouth
- Create buzz and excitement
- Earn trust/loyalty - inform and educate
- Evangelize - convert the non believers
- Marketing data - gather feedback and ideas
- Relationship - demonstrate that you care



## What Does it Look Like?

*NOTE: There are no hard rules or definitions. Every community is unique.*

- Members share a common interest
- Member participation and activity
- Real people are authentically represented
- Peer to peer interaction and contribution



## Where Can We Create One?

- Facebook
- Blogs
- Ning
- Twitter
- Google Groups
- Forums
- Custom build



## Getting People To Participate

*Show people you care about them before you expect them to care about you.*

- Think and act like a good party host
- Remove obstacles and barriers
- (Benefit them) > (Benefit me). Align your goals with the community's and you're gold.
- Tap into what your niche cares about
- Make it fun. Offer activities, contests, and giveaways.
- Deliver "WOW" experiences
- Recruit champions. Invite the "cool kids" to the party.
- Empower members to contribute and influence. Allow them to be invested.

- Promote and feature your members (above yourself)
- Create original, unique and valuable content
- Create compelling discussions. Give people something to talk about.
- Be interesting, funny, entertaining and creative.
- Trade control for contributions
- Advocate for the community. Be a man or woman of the people.



## Tips and Advice

- Know your objectives, goals and strategy. Be prepared to change. Embrace it.
- Be prepared to defend your community from trolling, flaming and spam.
- Keys to succeed: sincere caring, personality, generosity, emotional maturity and fortitude
- "Why didn't you tell me my fly was open?" Negative feedback is a gift.
- Step in and lead and step back and watch. Both are important.
- Be a shining example of the behavior you desire from your members.
- Be open to unexpected contributions from members.
- Create community guidelines right away
- Be engaged. Listen. Respond.
- Resist the temptation to sell and market (too much).



## Examples

- [www.keenfootwear.com/community.aspx](http://www.keenfootwear.com/community.aspx)
- [www.mommag.com/blog](http://www.mommag.com/blog)
- <http://poweredbyorange.com>
- <http://twitter.com/PeacockBarGrill>
- <http://stackoverflow.com>
- <http://www.willametteinnovators.com>
- <http://corvallisparents.ning.com>
- <http://communities.intel.com>

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