

10 STEPS TO COMMUNITY SUCCESS IN B2B SOFTWARE





INTRODUCTION

Online communities facilitate and encourage your customers to interact with each other and your company. This has wide-reaching benefits for your organization—reducing support tickets, increasing customer retention and enabling product ideation to name a few.

So, thinking about launching a community of your own? Here are our top 10 recommendations for getting started:

1. Align Internally

It's critical to define the business case for your community before launching an implementation plan. Defining the community's strategic function helps guide planning and rollout, maximizing the return on your investment from the first day your community goes live. Remember, the plan doesn't need to be complex, just clear.

2. Create Clear Objectives, Goals, Strategies, and Measurements

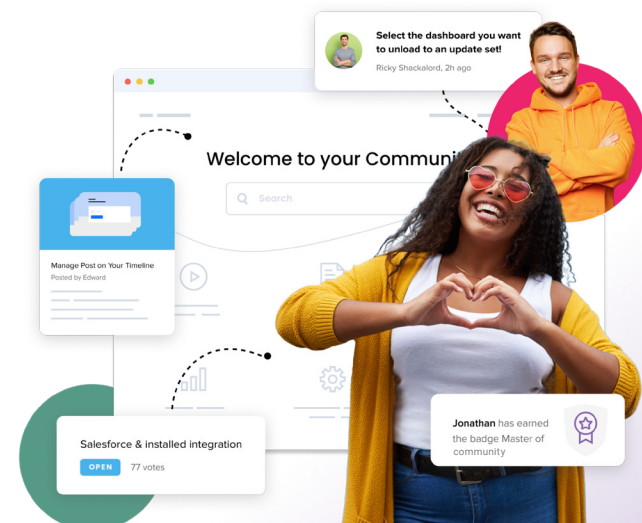
Your objective(s) describe the long-term vision you have for your community, while goals are measurable targets on the road to realizing that vision. Strategies lay out how you expect to achieve your goals. Defining these components—and identifying how you'll measure your progress—helps you start strong and stay focused on KPIs as your community grows.

3. Assign Roles and Responsibilities

Who will own the community? How will it be managed on a day-to-day basis? Align internally and answer these questions to ensure the community rollout goes smoothly and you're set up for future success.

4. Create the Right Community Concept

The community concept is what you want your community to accomplish for users. You may opt to make support its primary function. Other communities are focused on product ideation in order to drive innovation, while some focus on creating marketing awareness and brand ambassadors to increase customer engagement and retention. Defining the desired user experience will guide the design and layout of your Community.

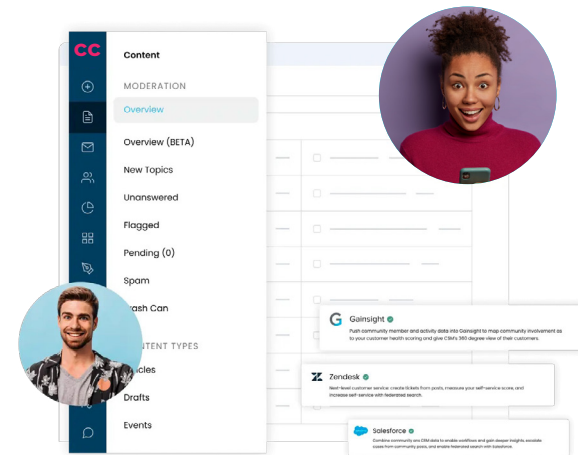


5. Employ the Right Community Building Strategies

There are three critical elements when it comes to building a successful community strategy: driving traffic, encouraging content creation, and activating new users. Linking to your community from your website, email newsletters and social networks can boost visits and incentivise customers to become community members. Finally, optimizing your community content for SEO will greatly help customers find your community organically.

6. Train Your Moderators on Conversation Tactics and the Backend Environment

Make sure your moderation staff is familiar with both the front and backend of the community. Browse your community vendor's knowledge base—or attend their training sessions—to educate your moderators on engagement best practices and familiarize them with moderation strategies, such as private messaging.



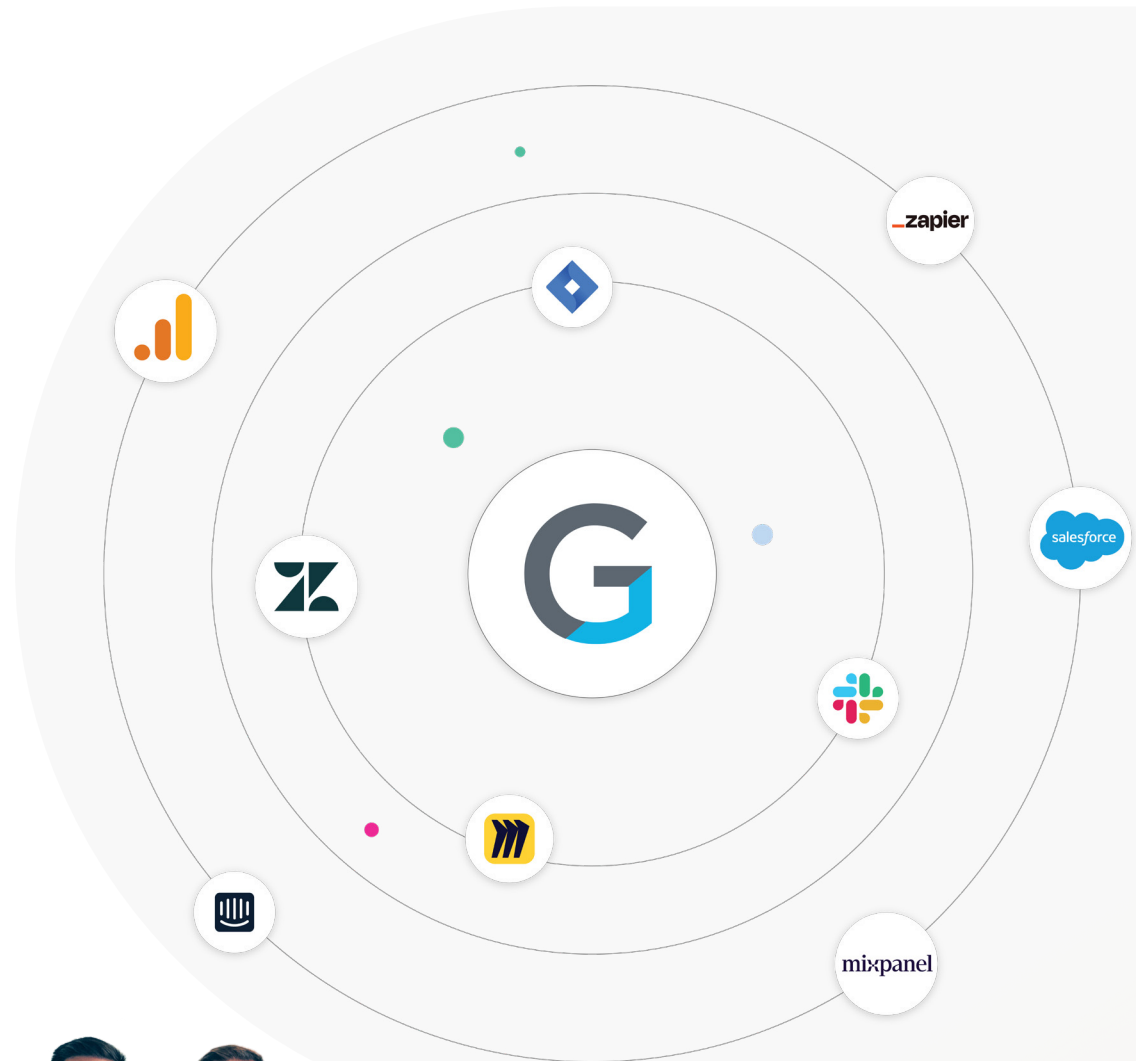
7. Create a Community Launch Plan

It's essential to involve key community stakeholders in this step. A good launch plan will typically involve members of an organization's support, customer success, product and IT teams. Align these departments on messaging to make sure you maximize traffic to your new community.

8. Integrate Your Community With Your Customer Success and Support Tools

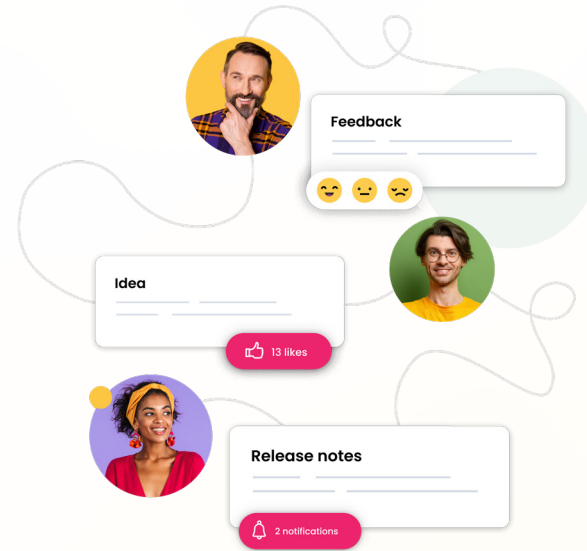
Integrating your community with your ticketing system, such as Zendesk, and your customer success platform like Gainsight CS unlocks a wealth of data about your customer. These integrations give you a 360 view of customer engagement, health, and help you understand the impact and ROI of your community.

As the community grows, the stakeholders from Customer Success, Support, and other departments should also be kept up to speed with regular reporting on your community. Make sure you define what KPIs you'll report on (think number of community members, most liked posts), and set a calendar so there is a regular cadence of data flowing to the departments that rely on the community.



9. Create More User-Generated Content With Gamification

Leverage gamification to encourage participation among community members. Badges can be awarded for answering questions, voting on others posts, crafting verified answers, and more. Best of all, the gamification system itself serves as motivation for more customers to get involved, using awards status to prompt customer FOMO (fear of missing out) and further engagement.



10. Identify Super Users and Advocates

Using your gamification statistics and other engagement metrics like post field analysis, identify your most active community members. These are the super users who show a natural inclination for helping to advance the community's goals and act as advocates and champions for your business. These users can be rewarded with special perks, like access to hidden categories or beta programs, featured on customer case studies or other advocacy efforts, or get special gamification badges to acknowledge their contributions. Some high-performing communities even assign moderator roles to super users.



There you have it, your 10 steps towards a successful online customer community. Always remember that true community success requires careful planning, correct implementation and clear community management.

For more information on how to run a successful online community, check out all our resources on gainsight.com



INCREASE RETENTION AND BOOST CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH GAINSIGHT CUSTOMER COMMUNITIES

Gainsight Customer Communities is the leading customer engagement platform for B2B software companies, used by customer success and support teams in companies across the globe. Want to reduce support requests by 50%, increase retention and drive product adoption? Our platform combines a powerful knowledge base with an online community to provide self-service support, integrated in your own product. Leveraging the power of your customers, engaging your users and gaining valuable insights about your product has never been easier.

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