



# Community Manager Salary Survey 2014

A Career Path  
Emerges



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A woman and a man are sitting at a long white desk in a modern office. The woman is on the left, wearing a light blue top, and the man is on the right, wearing a green shirt. They are both looking at their laptops. The background features a dark wall with several vertical purple light fixtures.

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Customer and partner relationships deepen.  
Innovation blooms.  
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# about this research

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# About this research

## The Community Roundtable's mission is to advance the business of community.

At The Community Roundtable, we work with community professionals in over 100 organizations. These individuals are at the forefront of understanding the future of organizations and the future of work. The discipline of community management is a strategic enabler for innovation, and while it is becoming better understood, the specific roles within that discipline are still often poorly defined, measured and rewarded. We know from our work that there is a huge range in experience, responsibilities and compensation among community managers, leading to frustration and ultimately impeding the ability of organizations to transform for the digital era.

We conducted this research to champion the work of community leaders and help professionalize community management. We wanted to publish a multifaceted view of community management roles to better help organizations find, develop and reward individuals in these roles.

Existing research on community manager roles, most notably Social Fresh's 2013 Community Manager Report and our own State of Community Management 2013 research has been focused on one type of community (in the case of the Social Fresh research) or on general trends (in the case of our 2013 research). There was also excellent research done by Bill Johnston while at Forum One up to 2009.

The launch of this research platform marks the start of a comprehensive, annual look at community management roles to give individuals and hiring managers information that helps:

1. Justify investment in community management staff
2. Define the roles of community professionals by level of responsibility and context
3. Align compensation rates with responsibilities and experience

In this first year we've created a skills framework for community management to hire, assess, demonstrate or grow skill sets. We look forward to your feedback and participation as this research platform evolves.

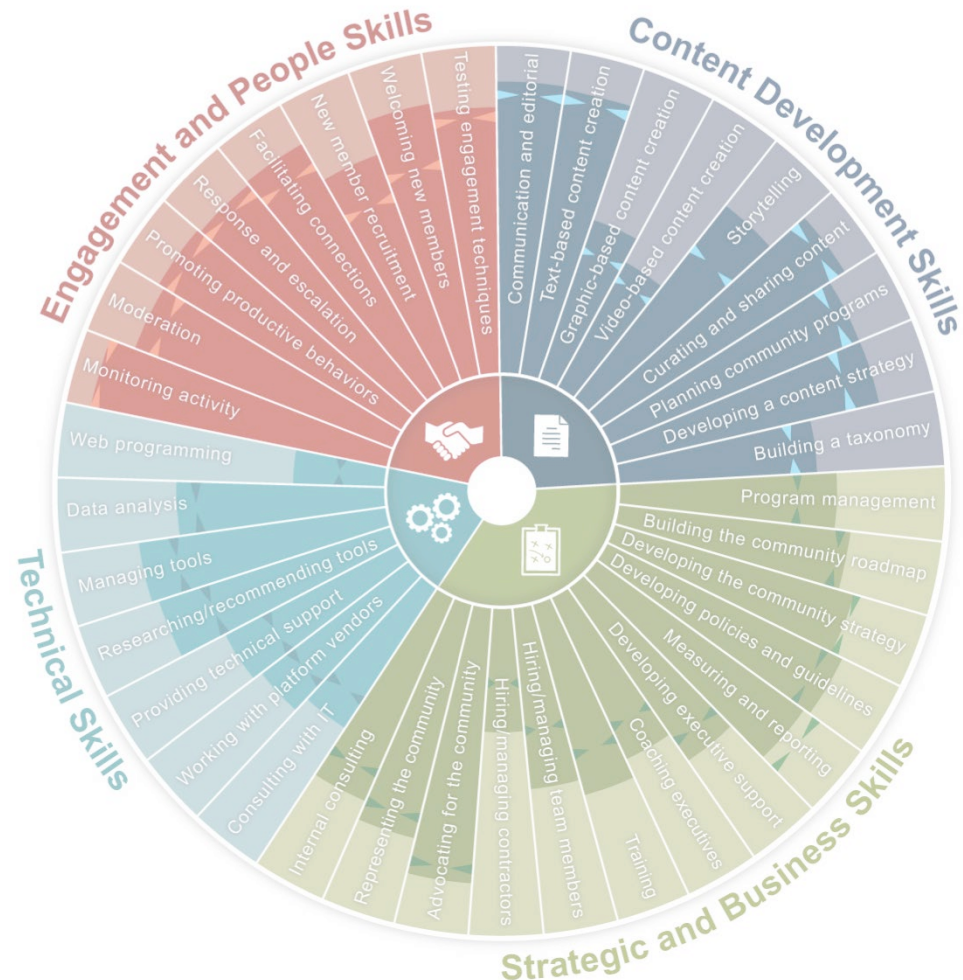
# Community Management Skills Framework™

The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 research documents the first iteration of a new Community Management Skills Framework to identify the skills and responsibilities of community professionals.

This research classifies community management skills in four categories essential to the profession:

- **Engagement and people skills**
- **Content development skills**
- **Strategic and business skills**
- **Technical skills**

Read more about how community management competencies vary among roles in the Career Profiles section on page 15.



# Survey methodology

**The Community Roundtable developed this research with the input of TheCR Network members. It includes:**

- Job titles
- Community use cases
- Years of experience
- Skills
- Job responsibilities
- Compensation
- Work environment
- Performance evaluation
- Professional development

Participants self-reported the information used to produce this report. We are mindful that individuals self-report subjectively on qualitative measures, and the skills data should be interpreted with this in mind.

This research provides general trends in the roles and compensation of community professionals. Because of the modest survey response for some regions, industries, use cases and job titles, this data does not accurately reflect every specific circumstance.

The salary information in this report is based on the averages of the annual salaries of full-time professionals in U.S. dollars. Participants outside of the United States self-calculated their salary based on the exchange rate in the summer of 2014.

Survey participants were recruited through The Community Roundtable's clients, members and public networks and because of that is biased toward the demographics of our audience.

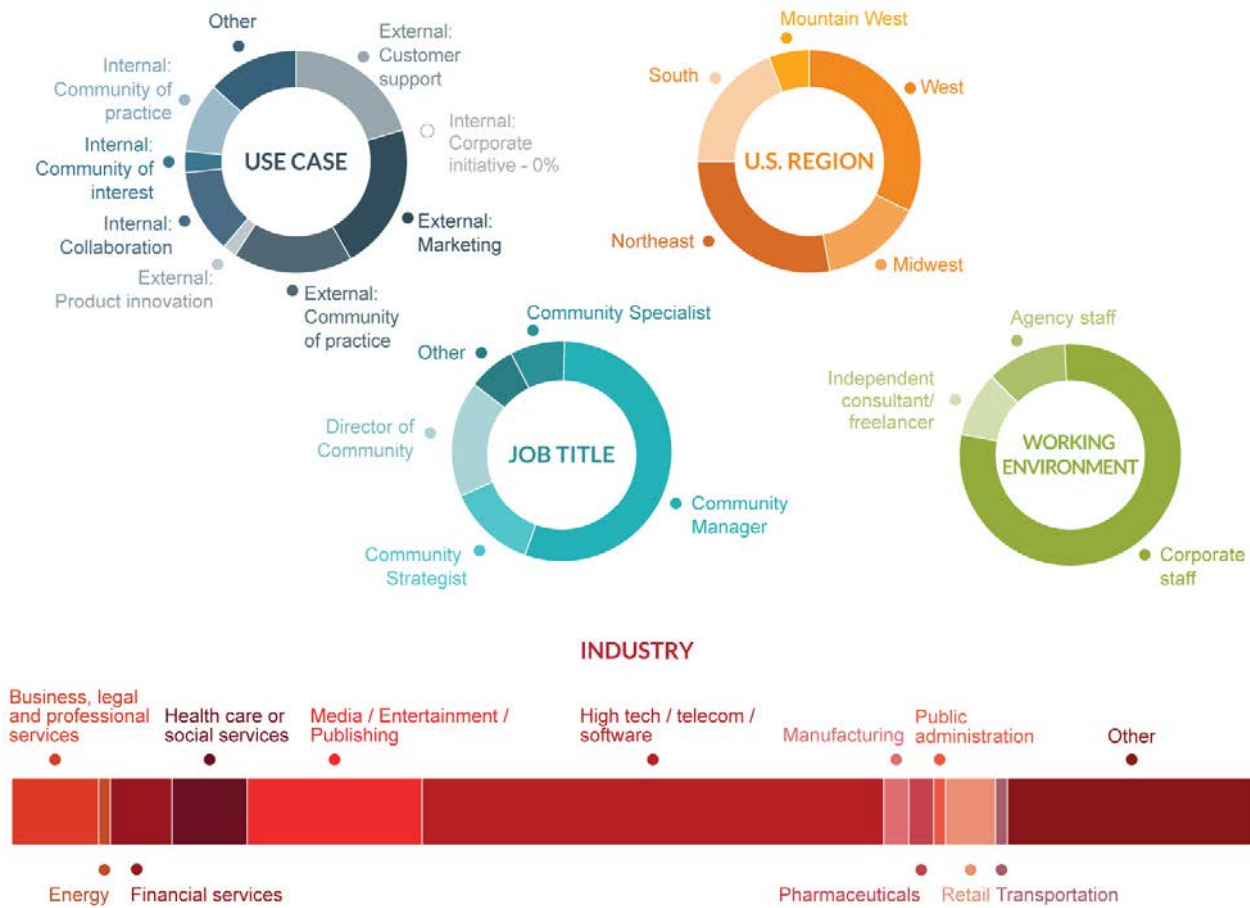
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353 participants responded, from varying geographies, industries and community use cases.  
See the survey demographics on slide 9 for more information

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# Demographics



353 community professionals participated in the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014.

The most represented industries were high tech/telecom/software, media/publishing and business/legal and professional services.

Approximately 71 percent of participants work with external communities, and 33 percent work with internal communities. (4 percent work with both).

# the big picture

Community management is emerging as a strategic competency

# Community management is a strategic competency

## Community management is the future of management and enables the future of work.

The online community management role is not a new one - Gail Ann Williams was hired by The Well, one of the earliest online communities, in the early 90s. While early online communities tended to form around niche topics and interests, they now address a wide range of needs and include a cross section of society.

The Community Roundtable's work focuses on how organizations are adopting community approaches to solve complex problems, change their culture and innovate. Because communities are one of the most effective ways to enable learning, personal growth and productivity, they play key roles in the development of more fluid, rapidly evolving organizations. Community professionals – specialists, managers, strategists and directors – are those who understand the power and dynamics of community approaches and are in the best position to help organizations

transition to the future of work and deploy new generative business models. We celebrate these community professionals who champion a new style of communication, work to build relationships, constantly make connections and are an important force of change.

Community management is becoming a more strategic skillset among all types of professionals. From our work with clients and members of TheCR Network, we're seeing community professional take on new challenges, grow their teams, broaden their influence and increasingly act as internal consultants to establish the community management discipline across their organizations.

### This research:

1. Profiles the evolution of community management roles.
2. Confirms emerging senior community management roles.
3. Documents the ongoing challenges of aligning roles, compensation and responsibilities.

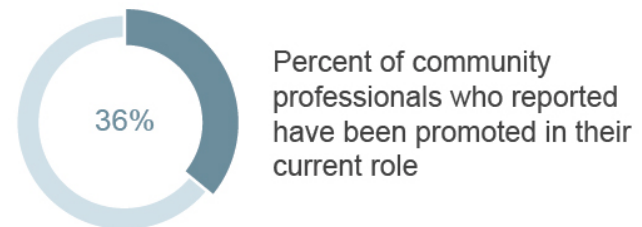
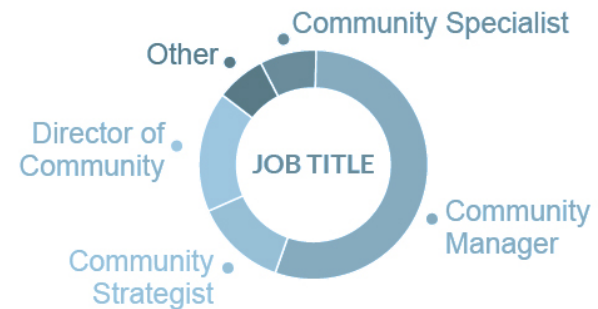
# The profession is expanding and evolving

## Community management is evolving into various roles and revealing a career path.

Organizations are hiring experienced community professionals with increasing frequency – giving professionals looking for a career in community management a growing number of options and opportunities to advance.

Though “Community Manager” is the most common job title among survey participants, a ladder of community management roles exists and allows professionals to grow in their field. Those with a knack for community performance analytics may move into a strategist role. Others with strong leadership and business skills may leverage their community management experience into a director role.

Over one third of professionals reported being promoted into their current community management role, signaling that they have a valued role and skillset. We see community professionals advancing their careers by taking on new roles at other organizations, too, or starting their own consulting business.



# Community executives are on the rise

## Community executives are using their influence to transform organizations.

Community executives are a rare but growing cadre of individuals who have transformative effects on their organizations. Most likely having experience managing communities themselves, they understand how to use networked communications to create shared value, build advocacy and lower operational costs.

Directors of community have often climbed the ranks of community in their organization. They have strong interpersonal skills and a knack for understanding how to work with a community to produce tangible business value. Though directors of community are likely participants in their program's community, they do not manage the day-to-day planning, programming, moderation and engagement. Instead directors and vice presidents of community focus on strategic planning, program and team management and advocating for the community.

## Top 10 Responsibilities for Directors of Community

1. Developing the community strategy
2. Advocating for the community
3. Developing community policies and governance
4. Building the community roadmap
5. Program management
6. Measuring and reporting community performance
7. Representing the community
8. Planning community programs
9. Communication and editorial oversight
10. Testing engagement techniques

# Titles, roles and compensation are out of sync

## Inconsistencies in role definition undermine advancement in community management.

Despite the growing opportunities in community management, a lack of understanding of what community professionals do (and are capable of doing) still exists. Inconsistencies in job profiles hold some community professionals back, causing many to burn out and driving others out of the field altogether.

The “community manager” job title doesn’t readily suggest or guarantee a certain level of experience or expertise. The title can mean many different things, as we discovered from the range of professionals surveyed. Though on average it’s a mid-level role, we see “community managers” who are recent college graduates and others with over a decade of experience.

These inconsistencies make it difficult for community professionals to get recognition and compensation commensurate with their skills and/or responsibilities. They can cause professionals to feel frustrated when they look for new opportunities or greater responsibility, stalling their career or

causing them to leave the discipline. It also makes it difficult for hiring managers to fill community roles and understand how to measure performance.

Key Responsibilities:	Basic Qualifications:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Formulate and run experiments and campaigns to grow and strengthen community</li><li>Create content for multiple content management systems</li><li>Create emails for challenge followers</li><li>Post updates and engage in conversations on social media</li><li>Moderate comments on the community platform</li><li>Spend up to 10 hours/week commenting on community posts to encourage and cross-pollinate participation</li><li>Provide technical/customer support to members</li><li>Develop community management curriculum</li><li>Develop a framework for offline engagement around challenges</li><li>In addition to written content, create media around challenge subjects (Types of media: video, audio;</li></ul>	<p><b>We are looking for a well-connected Community Manager who:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Has managed online communities and/or maintains a blog</li><li>Is comfortable engaging with internal and external stakeholders</li><li>Is passionate about design and design thinking</li><li>Understands the idea of open innovation or crowdsourcing</li><li>Possesses 2+ years of industry experience</li><li>Has user experience know-how and is comfortable with Adobe Photoshop/basic HTML and CSS editing</li><li>Is curious about a wide variety of business-related topics</li><li>Has demonstrated the ability and desire to understand the individuals, contexts, and interpersonal dynamics of a community</li></ul>

*Sample community manager job description, highlighting inconsistent and unrealistic expectations for the role. See more on page 45.*

# career profiles

A look at three distinct roles for community management professionals

# Community management career profiles

## The ‘community manager’ title no longer reflects the breadth of community management responsibilities.

For many years, the title ‘community manager’ has been the dominant role in the community field. As the discipline has grown, one role has become insufficient to address all the needs of community teams – both because the responsibilities (and the experience they require) are expanding and because there are disciplines within the field – like analytics, content or governance – that can be roles in their own right.

This research profiles three community management roles and two business use case categories. These represent the segments for which we have the most data and highlights some of the biggest differentiators.

The three roles/job titles profiled in this research are:

1. **Community Manager**
2. **Community Strategist**
3. **Director of Community**

Research participants identified the specific business use case of their communities. For the purposes of this report, we consolidated these into two high-level use cases – communities focused on external (market or customer) populations and those focused on internal (employee) populations.

### External use cases:

- Customer support
- Marketing
- Community of practice
- Product innovation

### Internal use cases:

- Collaboration
- Community of interest
- Community of practice
- Corporate initiative

The career profiles in this research examine experience, compensation and responsibilities.



# Career profiles at-a-glance

	Community Manager		Community Strategist		Director of Community	
	External	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal
Years of work experience	10.8	15.6	14.3	15.3	16.4	16.2
Years of community management experience	4.2	4.7	6.9	4.5	7.4	7.1
Average salary	\$69,887	\$74,939	\$85,075	\$90,400	\$106,356	\$113,263
Median	\$70,000	\$70,000	\$82,500	\$92,000	\$97,500	\$105,000
Range	\$31K-\$145K	\$26K-\$150K	\$25K-\$183K	\$51K-\$140K	\$39K-\$240K	\$50K-\$240K
Percent who receive a bonus	51%	55%	55%	65%	56%	65%
Percent who have been promoted	26%	36%	38%	29%	59%	55%

# Community manager

## Community manager is the most common job title.

Similar job titles include: *Community engagement manager, Online engagement coordinator, Social experience specialist.*

Community manager is the most common title – by a wide margin – in our research and the typical entry point to the discipline of professional community management, although we did see an emerging role for community specialists – individual contributors without management responsibilities.

The community managers we surveyed defied any perception of the role as an entry-level position for those with limited business experience. The average community manager has over 10 years in the workforce – a far cry from an intern moderating a spam queue.

Whether focused internally or externally, community managers' primary goal is creating the conditions for constructive engagement – the discussions, questions and participation that create business value.



### Top three responsibilities

- Monitoring activity and listening
- Communication and editorial
- Curating and sharing content

### Top three performance metrics

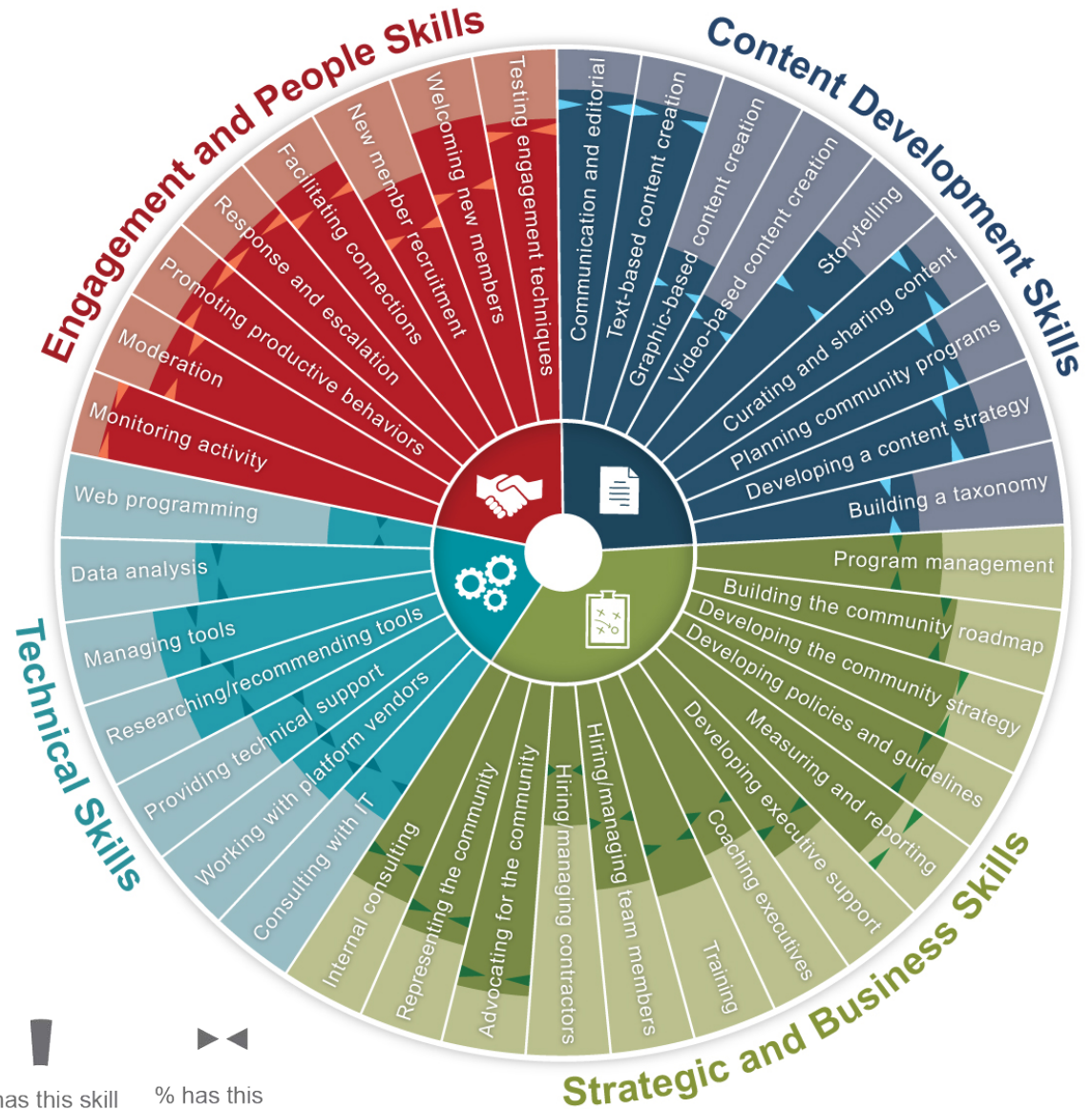
- Activity rates
- Membership growth
- Specific business outcomes

# Community manager

Engagement and people skills are an essential part of this role that is heavy on member interactions.

64 percent of community managers ranked engagement and people skills most important to their role out of the four skill categories (and another 23 percent ranked it second most important).

Internal community managers have more strategic responsibilities related to change management in their organizations – they’re advocates for the community and are more likely to be responsible for developing executive support and coaching executives and member training.



■ % has this skill  
 ◀▶ % has this responsibility

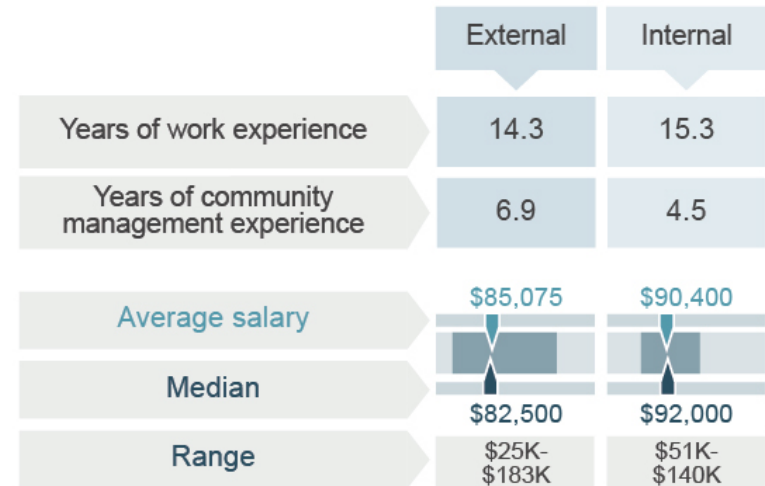
# Community strategist

## Community strategists are analysts.

*Similar job titles include: Community engagement analyst, Social strategy and content manager, Community strategy consultant.*

Like community managers, community strategists are charged with creating the conditions for engagement, but they are typically looking across communities and, as the title implies, have an orientation toward analysis. By analyzing what works across communities, they can help design effective community strategies and apply best practices. Given this macro orientation, it makes sense that strategists are the most likely to work in a consultative role – 24 percent working in agencies and 11 percent working as independent contractors.

Externally, strategists look at how communities fit into their customers' ecosystem, and over 70 percent of external strategists manage social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Internally, strategists act as internal consultants – helping business units understand and deploy community approaches.



### Top three responsibilities

- Monitoring activity and listening
- Developing the community strategy
- Measuring and reporting community performance

### Top three performance metrics

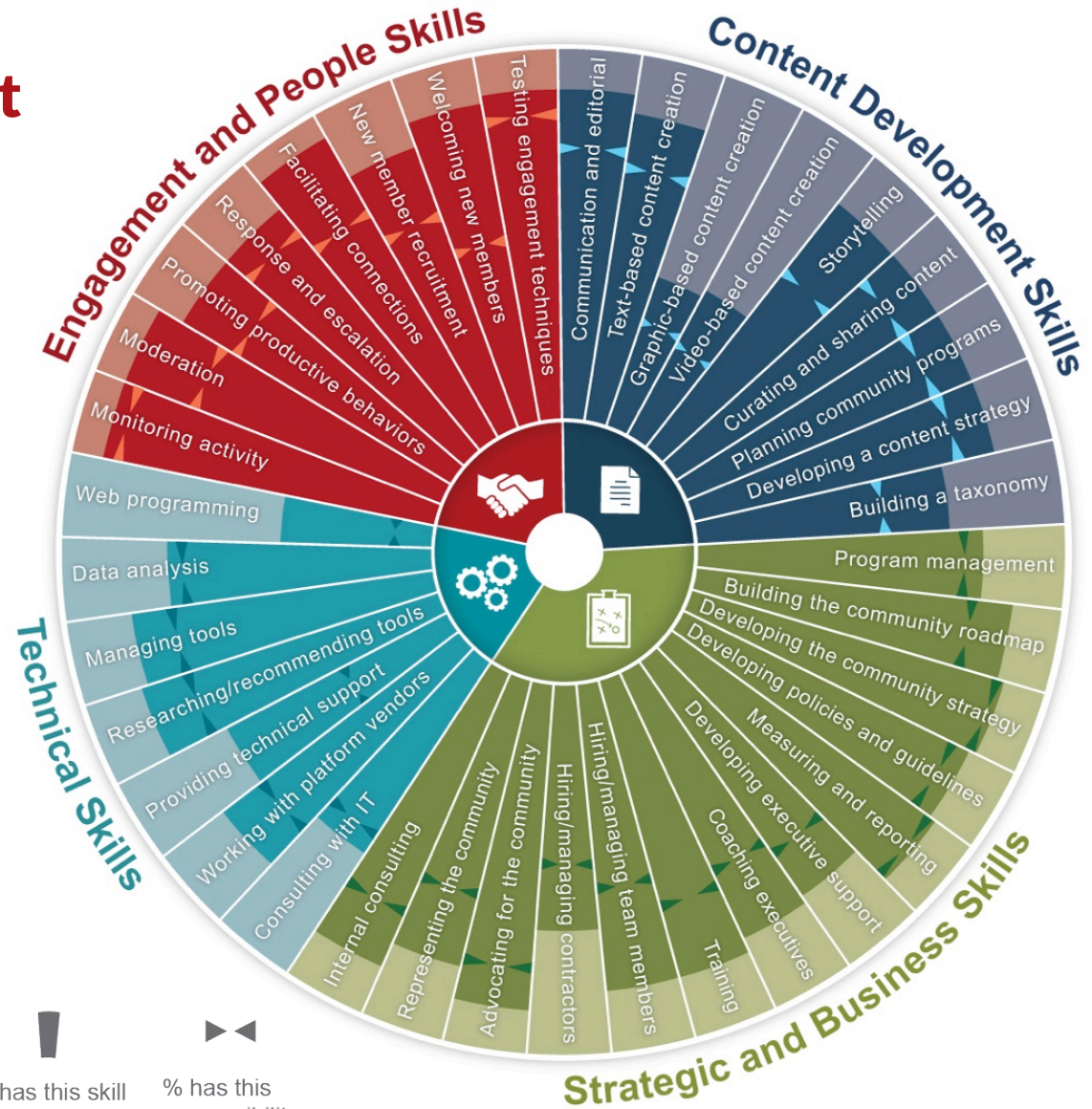
- Specific business outcomes
- Activity rates
- Membership growth

# Community strategist

Engagement and people skills rank as most important in this role, but strategic and business skills were most important to almost 20 percent of strategists. Strategists also have the highest technical skills among the three job profiles in this research.

External strategists have a wider range of responsibilities than internal strategists profiled and are more likely to be responsible for overall program management.

Internal strategists' top priorities include building the community strategy and roadmap, measurement, internal consulting, advocating for the community, training and consulting with IT on platform integration



# Director of community

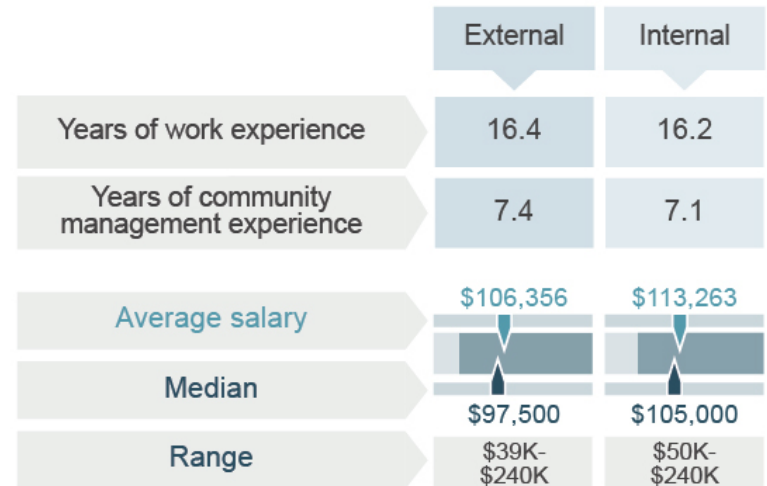
## Directors of community own community programs.

Similar job titles include: Director of social business, Head of community, Senior community ambassador.

Directors of community are responsible for community programs – strategy, governance, team management and budgets. Not every community has a director – instead, a functional executive often takes on these responsibilities. The director of community role is more common in mature communities, in large organizations and in organizations where the community program is central to the business model.

Like in the community manager’s role, relationship building is a central piece for directors of community – their focus is on executives, stakeholders and community leaders. Directors primary goal is to work with executives to ensure the community is creating demonstrable value for the organization.

External directors of community are typically focused primarily on program management, while their internal counterparts have greater responsibility for coaching executives and other training.



### Top three responsibilities

- Developing the community strategy
- Advocating for the community
- Developing community policies and guidelines

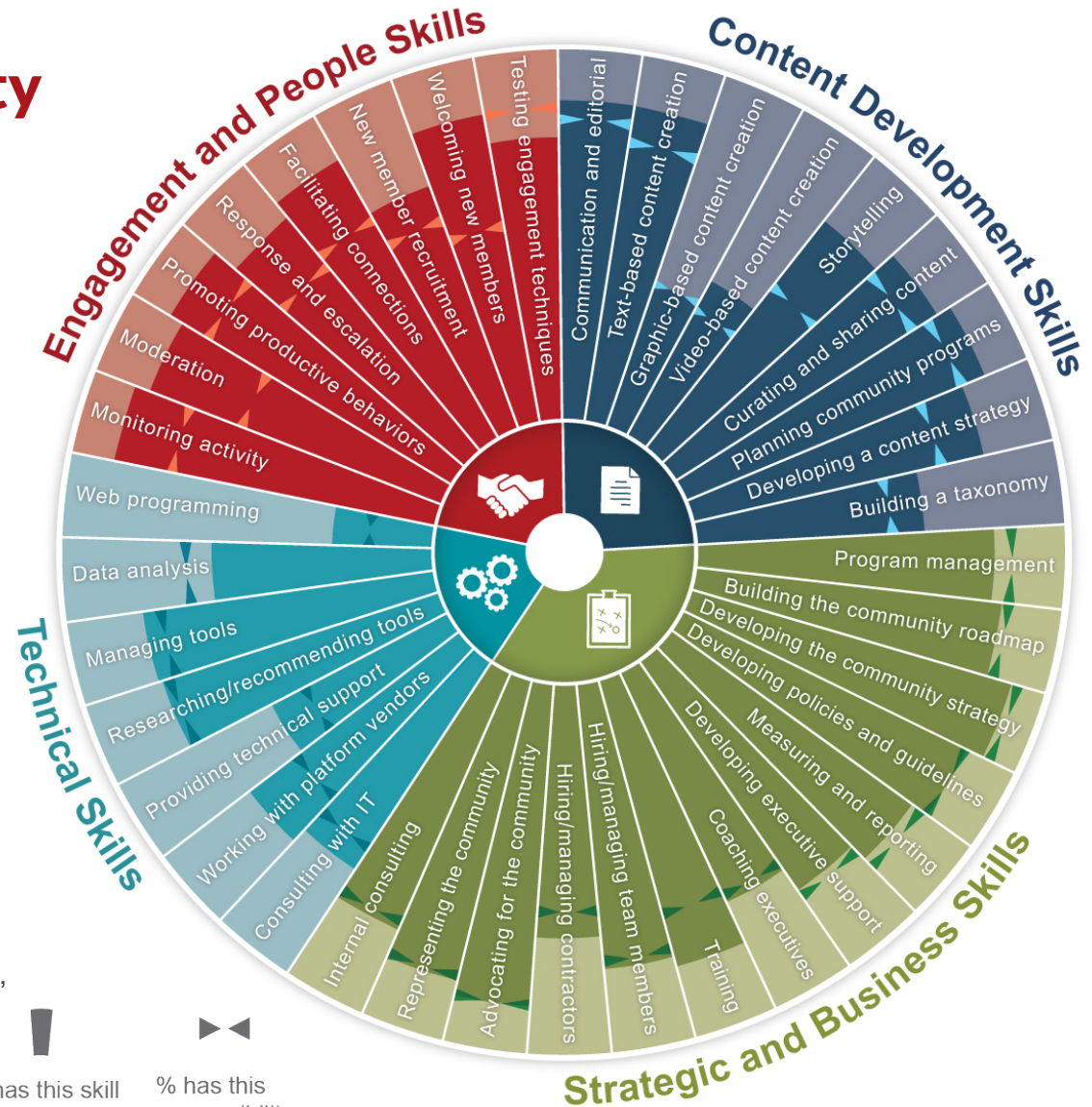
### Top three performance metrics

- Activity rates
- Specific business outcomes
- Membership growth

# Director of community

Directors of community bring a community management skillset – strong engagement skills, a knack for content development – to the table, but spend most of their time on strategic and business objectives. While similar in skill profile to strategists, directors of community spend a great deal of their time advocating for the community, managing the program and managing team members.

Interestingly and despite the fact that it is the bulk of their work, *only 33 percent rank strategic and business skills as most important to their role.* This suggests that while the business skills are important, a firm grounding in day-to-day community management is critical, and the responsibilities of the role cannot be fulfilled without that grounding.



# skills & responsibilities

What community  
management professionals  
know and do



# Community management is a complex discipline

**Working with communities requires a diverse skill set and is more complex than many assume.**

This research classifies community management skills in four skill families:

- **Engagement and people skills:** These skills enable relationship development, understanding motivations and the design of social environments that reward individuals.
- **Content development skills:** These skills enable the creation of multi-modal content and programming designed to build engagement and drive value from multiple segments.
- **Strategic and business skills:** These skills include the program management, governance, advocacy and training required for organizations to understand this new approach.
- **Technical skills:** These skills include an understanding of the need for and implications of platform architecture, integration and analytics.

The State of Community Management 2013 research was The Community Roundtable's first quantitative look at the community management skillset. The research found *community managers rank engagement and people skills as most important in their role.*

This research explores the different responsibilities in each of these skill categories and if/how the way community professionals prioritize these skills changes depending on their experience level and job profiles.

Overall, engagement and people skills continue to rank highest across all job profiles. Content development skills are more important for less senior roles, and developing strategic and business skills is critical for community professionals looking to advance in their career. Technical skills are most relevant to community strategist roles.



*State of Community Management 2013*

# Engagement and people skills

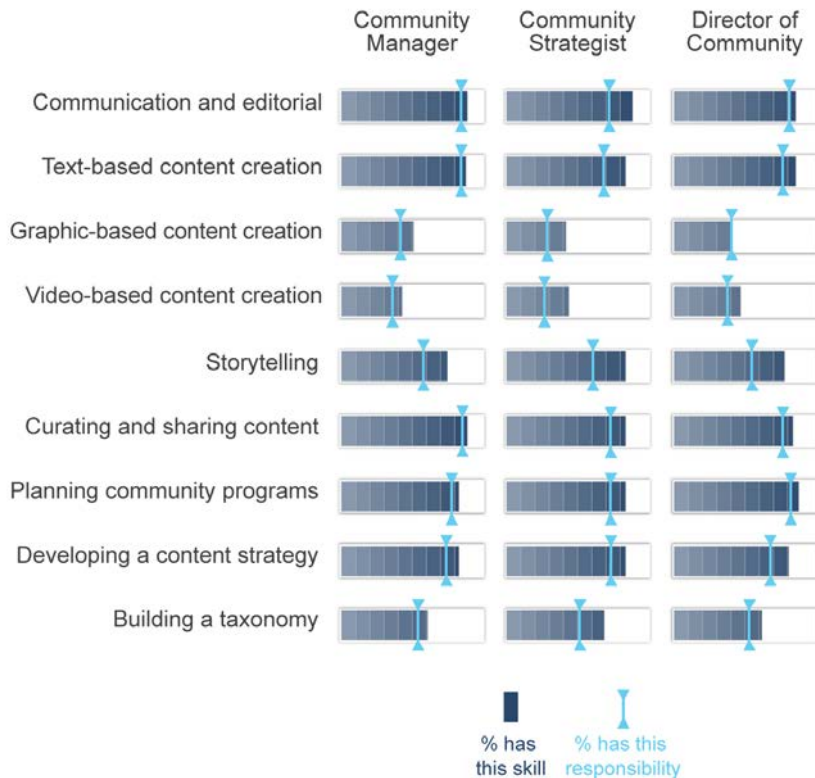


Engagement and people skills are essential to a community professional's ability to design and sustain social environments that encourage and reward productive engagement. Not surprisingly, *this is the strongest skillset among community professionals*. Across job profiles, a majority report having almost all of the skills in this set and rank these skills most important in their role. Community strategists claim the strongest engagement and people skills, but community managers are most likely to use these skills in their role.

## Skills to use:

- **New member recruitment** is an important task for growing and reenergizing a community. Although 77 percent of respondents reported having this skill, only 60 percent reported having this responsibility.
- **Welcoming new members** is critical to establishing engagement behavior and building relationships in the community. 84 percent of community managers reported having this skill, but only 65 percent are welcoming members in their role.

# Content development skills



Content development is a key driver of engagement in online communities – and it’s so important it has its own competency in the Community Maturity Model. *This skillset ranks second in importance among community professionals*, and community managers have the most content development skills and responsibilities. Nearly universal skills include: communication and editorial, text-based content creation, curating and sharing content, planning community programs and developing a content strategy.

## Skills to build:

- **Building a taxonomy.** This skill is familiar to those in knowledge management and is a critical part of content management and re-use – and it contributes significantly to community value. Understanding how to best organize content is an opportunity for many community managers.
- **Graphic and/or video content creation.** Having multi-modal content is important for maturing communities, but these are weak skills for community professionals. Many organizations outsource this to agencies, but the ability to create graphic- and video-based content is a differentiator for community professionals who have it.

# Strategic and business skills



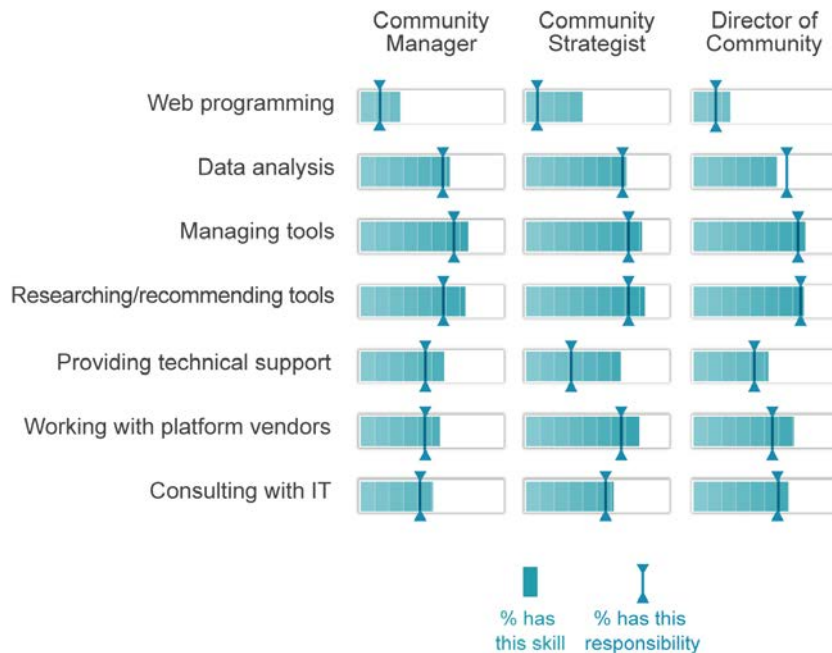
Strategic and business skills cover community program management, governance, advocacy and training. This skillset is more important to the community strategist and director of community roles that have strategic responsibilities.

*74 percent of directors rank strategic and business skills first or second in importance in their jobs (compared to 39 percent of community managers).*

## Skills to build:

- **Building a community roadmap.** A detailed roadmap outlines the initiatives and resources required to execute a community strategy. It is key to a successful community.
- **Coaching executives.** Executive engagement correlates with higher overall engagement and with fully resourced roadmaps. Understanding how to help executives engage constructively is critical to maturing communities.
- **Creating, purchasing and/or delivering training.** Community management skills and experience are in scarce supply but the need is growing. Training enables sharing of expertise at scale and is critical for enterprise-wide community programs.

# Technical skills



Working with online communities requires some technical skills and is important for:

- Selecting a community platform
- Translating member needs to application UX
- Keeping the technical pieces of the community working
- Working effectively with IT teams
- Understanding community analytics

We are seeing more of these IT tasks separated from community management, which is a good thing as it is a very complex skill set on its own. The research bears this out - technical skills are the weakest skillset among community professionals with *75 percent ranking this skillset as least important to their job*. Community strategists have the strongest skills in this category.

## Skills to build:

- **Researching and recommending tools** to understand how to meet your members' needs with the available technology.
- **Data analysis** to understand the dynamics, report on the value of community and prepare insightful community reports.

# career development & advancement

Building a career in  
community management

# Building a career in community management

## It's a good time to be a community manager.

Organizations are hiring and our research found roles in a variety of industries, locations and experience levels, signaling a wide variety of opportunities available.

However, the career path is still emerging and the definition and understanding of the role varies considerably. Some community manager roles are really much more like social marketing roles. Many have expectations and responsibilities misaligned with experience requirements and compensation, and many positions do not yet go through formal HR and hiring channels. Savvy community managers can see this as an opportunity to educate and shape their roles instead of as a barrier when navigating new opportunities.

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**Demonstrate your value:** Show how your community management led to specific business outcomes, demonstrating both the value of your experience and your ability to communicate that value.

**Build your skills:** Research the skills and responsibilities of individuals in roles you would like to have and build those skills. Take on responsibilities in your current role that you may not explicitly own but that you will need to demonstrate to move to a new role.

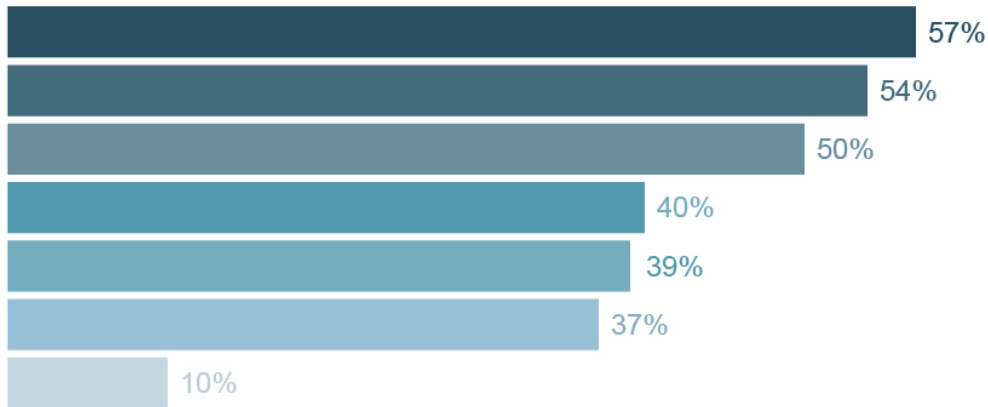
**Find your next role:** Be proactive about finding your next role. Much of the hiring in the community space happens through direct contact with the hiring manager – participate and engage in industry groups and events.

**Take advantage of learning opportunities:** Resources abound! Build your network and stay current with industry trends.

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# Demonstrate your value

Most community professionals don't have consistent measures of success.



- Community activity rates
- Community membership growth
- Specific business outcomes
- Content and/or programming reach
- Community sentiment
- Community management activities
- Executive participation rates

There is not overwhelming consistency in how community management performance is measured – the most consistent metric is community activity, but only a little more than half of professionals reported this as a performance measure.

Half of community professionals are being evaluated by specific business outcomes – this is an encouraging sign and something we expect to see more of as the discipline matures.

Community professionals who can show how community management leads to specific business outcomes will demonstrate the value of their experience and be more likely able to make the case for a promotion.



# Build your skills

## Looking for a job or a promotion in community management?

Based on what the research tells us about the skills and responsibilities of community professionals today, here are our recommendations about skills to build and skills to set you apart from the crowd.

### Looking to advance? Highlight these skills:

- ✓ New member recruitment
- ✓ Planning community programs
- ✓ Building a community roadmap
- ✓ Coaching executives
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Data analysis

### Looking to build a career in internal communities? Highlight these skills:

- ✓ Coaching executives
- ✓ Developing executive support
- ✓ Training
- ✓ Internal consulting

### Want to differentiate yourself from the pack? Highlight these skills:

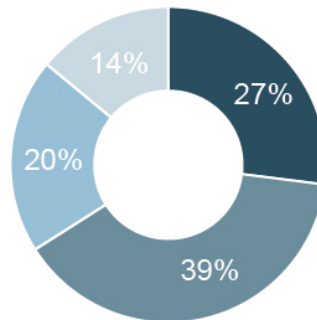
- ✓ Graphic and video based content creation skills
- ✓ Building a taxonomy/tagging strategy
- ✓ Web programming

# Find your next role

Community management is a profession of relationships – use your network to discover your next role. Most community jobs are not currently found through traditional job listings.

## Build your personal community

In a digital industry, reputation matters. Share what you know and seek to connect with others in the industry. Whether you're active on Twitter or LinkedIn, contribute to a professional development network or association, serve as a mentor, or speak at events, taking the time to help others learn what you know will demonstrate your expertise and commitment. Having a strong professional network increases your likelihood of having the inside scoop on new opportunities.



## Propose your own promotion

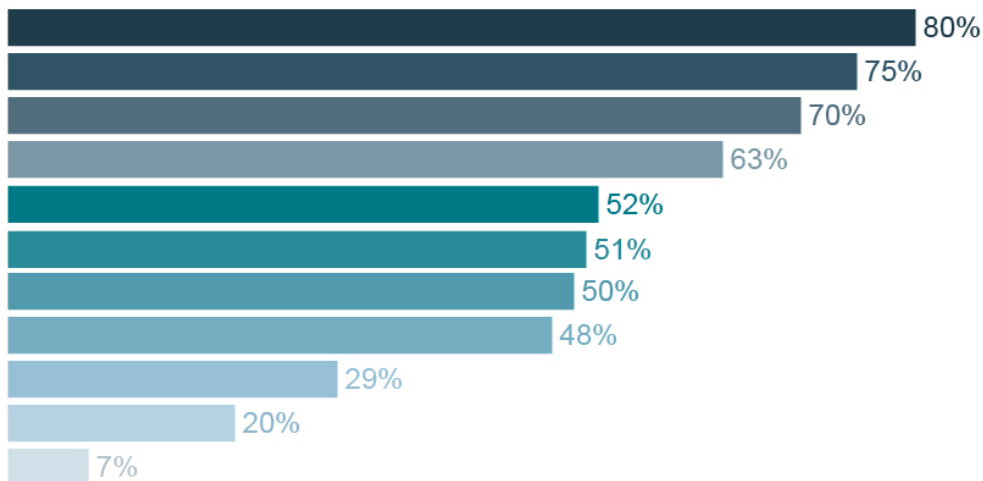
Not every organization has more than one community manager on staff, let alone clear advancement opportunities in community management. If you've been in your role for a few years, evaluate your current responsibilities and goals for your community. If you find you don't have the resources to keep up with the day-to-day tasks in the community AND focus on strategic planning, write a new job description detailing how your proposed new role will benefit the community and make the case for hiring someone to help out with your previous responsibilities.

- Applied to an external job posting
- Approached by or introduced to the hiring manager/team

- Defined and moved to a new role while in a previous role
- Other

# Take advantage of learning opportunities

Community professionals have no shortage of resources to help them grow in their careers.



- Publications and blogs
- Conferences
- Books
- Research
- Free online courses
- Professional development membership network

- Coaching or external advising from experts/consultants
- Mentoring
- Internal training
- Fee-based online courses
- Degree programs

Given the rise in community management, blogs, books and other publications are in abundance for those looking to read up on good practices and trends in the field.

Conferences and other networking opportunities that connect community professionals with their industry peers help them stay current with trends in a field that is growing as technology advances.

51 percent of survey respondents participate in a professional development membership network.

More than 60 percent of strategists and directors belong to such a network.

# conversation starters

Exploring community  
management in 2014

# Talking about community management in 2014

At The Community Roundtable, we look for *aha moments* – how people learn, change behaviors, come up with new ideas. We love great questions. This section surfaces a few of the findings we found interesting, but without general consensus couldn't include in the research.

2014 is the first year of the Community Manager Salary Survey, and we use this as a jumping off point to a larger discussion about the career path of professionals working in community management and professions requiring community management competencies.

On the following pages, we pose questions to explore further to help guide us as we develop this research in the future. We're sharing what the data is telling us, as well as what we've observed in our five years of working with community professionals in over 100 organizations.

We'd love to hear from you about what you're seeing and find interesting, too.

## Conversations in our network:

1. What should the career path look like for internal community management professionals?
2. What would a certification model in community management look like?
3. How do community professionals manage expectations and burnout?
4. What factors allow community professionals to successfully work remotely?



### Join the conversation:

Visit the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014  
research page at  
[www.communityroundtable.com/CMSS14](http://www.communityroundtable.com/CMSS14)

# The internal community management career path

We're seeing less consistency and clarity among internal community management careers. Although the data points to a general progression for community professionals from community manager to community strategist to director of community, this progression is less pronounced among professionals working with internal, employee-facing communities.

Internal community professionals generally have more work experience and strategic responsibilities than external community professionals, but roles and job titles don't always match seniority. Community professionals with more years of community management experience have the opportunity to advocate for more senior positions in their companies – they have a unique skillset and a strategic role, and organizations should compensate accordingly for this value they bring to the program.



**What does a career in internal community management look like in your organization? How do you think internal community professionals can build their careers?**



Join the conversation:

[www.communityroundtable.com/CMSS14](http://www.communityroundtable.com/CMSS14)

# Community management certification

Although most of the Community Manager Salary Survey collected quantitative information, we asked a few optional, short-response questions that explored challenges community professionals face, as well as resources they're looking for to help their career.

One common response to the question was:

*What have been or would be the most helpful resources for improving your credibility both with your internal stakeholders and with your community?*

Some participants noted certification courses they've taken in community management (such as those offered by Yammer and The Community Roundtable), but participants noted that something universally recognized would help them market their skills and be able to demonstrate to their organizations the value of the community management role.

We see the opportunity for certifications at different professional levels and for specific competencies, including:

Community Specialist

Community Manager

Community Strategist

Director of Community

VP of Community

Community Architect

Community Analyst

Community Engagement  
& Programming

Community Knowledge

Community Governance  
& Moderation

**What do you think? Do community managers need special accreditation for their skills? What would this model look like?**

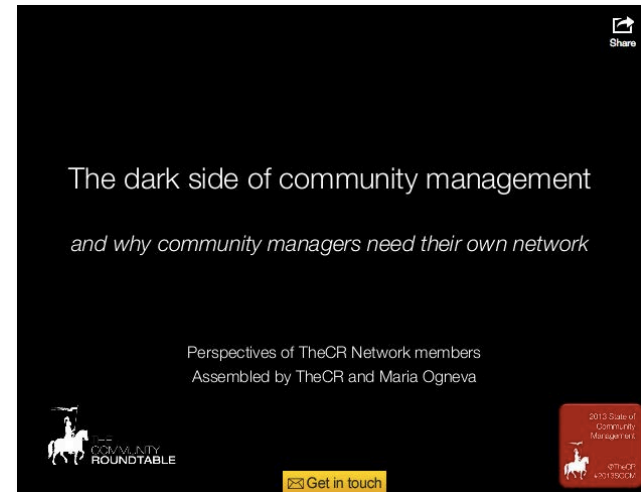
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## Avoiding burnout

Long days, too many responsibilities and burnout remain a common issues in the community management field. Some of the contributing factors are:

- Stakeholders do not always understand the scope of the role – and the resources required to successfully execute it.
- Community managers are typically highly networked across functional groups and customer segments. While a significant part of the value of a community approach is this boundary spanning, it leaves community managers responding to a vast array of requests, many of which cannot be neatly categorized.
- Community management roles explicitly require community managers to be jugglers – on different days they'll write code, create communications initiatives, coach executives, moderate comments, run programs and measure performance.



In 2013, TheCR Network members looked at the causes of community manager burnout and suggested solutions.

**What works for you? How to you balance expectations to avoid burnout?**

**Join the conversation:**

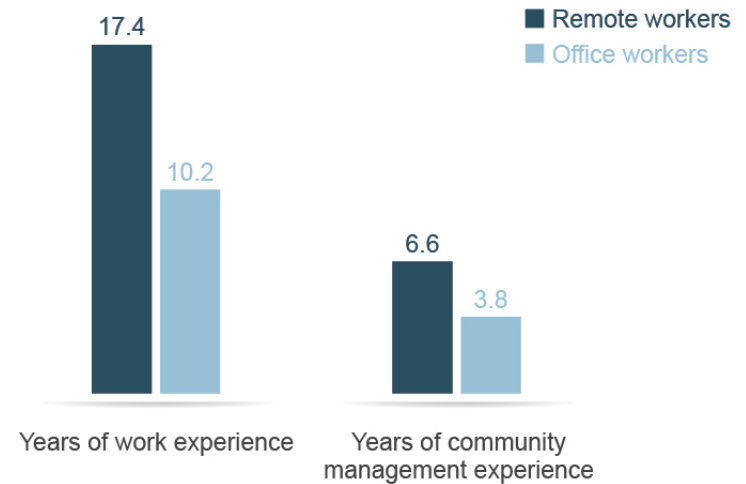
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# Negotiating remote work

As we developed the Community Manager Salary Survey, we asked TheCR Network members what they wanted to learn from this research. One area they wanted to explore was the prevalence and impact of working remotely. The results:

- On average, about 27 percent of professionals work remotely most of the time, and another 26 percent having the option to work remotely on occasion.
- Community professionals who work remotely have significantly more years of experience. These community professionals have 17.4 years of work experience and 6.6 years of community management experience.
- Directors of Community were 71 percent more likely to work remotely than Community Managers.
- Remote workers were only slightly more likely to report being promoted in their community management role than those who work in an office, suggesting this might be decision made at hiring.



We hypothesize that an advanced skillset helps community professionals negotiate their working environment.

**What factors do you think affect a community manager's ability to work remotely?**



**Join the conversation:**

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# what's next

Moving forward

# What's next?

## Community management has come a long way – what's next for the discipline?

As an organization dedicated to the advancement of community, we at The Community Roundtable are proud about how far the industry has come. Community management is like teaching – everyone does it, but some people do it professionally. Looking forward, we see three potential opportunities to advance the professional role of community management:

### 1 Realistic expectations

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Role definitions that have enough responsibilities for three people are one reason community managers are burning out. A new community may only need one community manager on staff, but a growing community in a large organization will require more resources to succeed.

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### 2 Rationalization of roles

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HR needs to understand what community management skills and responsibilities define each level of a community role. “Community manager” shouldn’t be the default or only job title and some thought should be given to how community managers advance in their career.

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### 3 Rise of community executives

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As more organizations embrace community as a key part of their business strategy, community professionals will hold more senior roles. They will use this rank to educate other executives to champion the cause and create widespread organizational change.

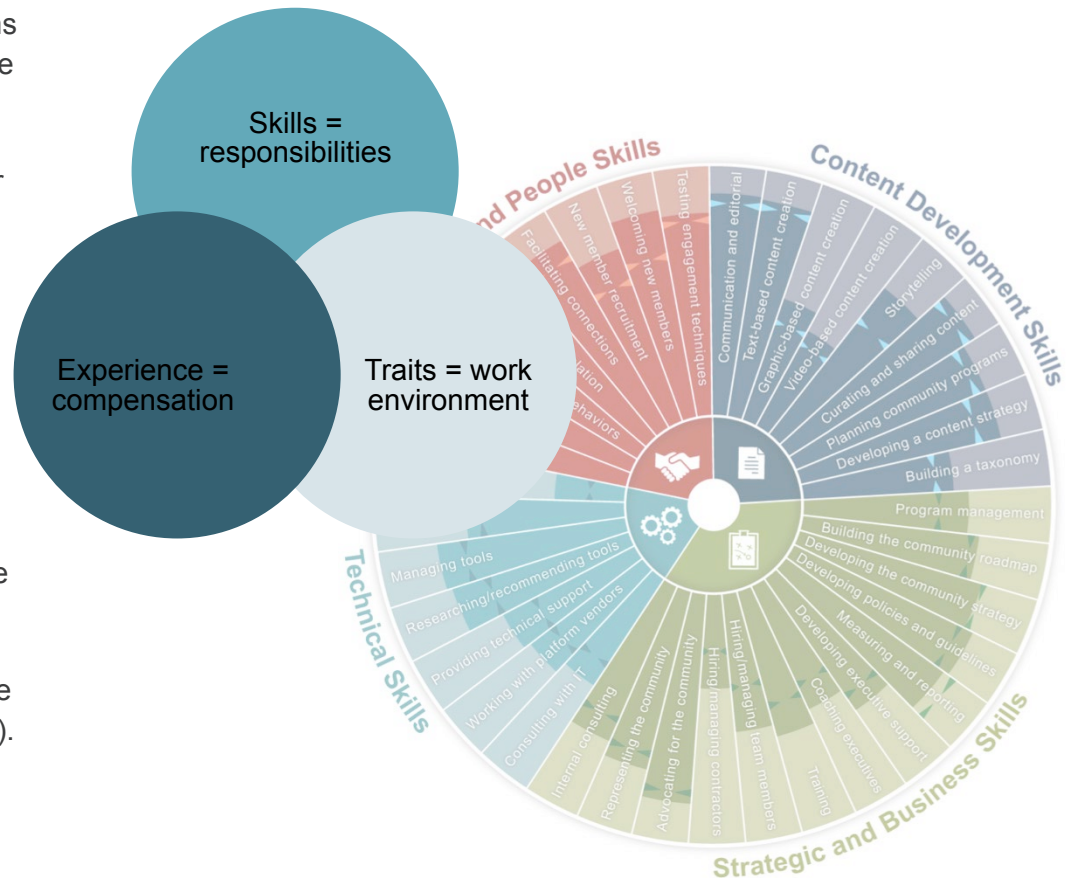
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# Realistic expectations

Organizations will better align community management resources with expectations.

Many current community management job descriptions are not well balanced and tend to be misaligned in one or more of the following ways:

- They want more experience than they can get for the compensation they are offering.
- They expect more specific expertise than is reasonable for the general years of experience required.
- They ask for more advanced skills than are required for the role's responsibilities.
- They have too many responsibilities listed for one individual to reasonably be able to handle.
- The traits they are looking are misaligned with the work environment (i.e. agile in a big bureaucracy).



## Realistic expectations: Sample Job Description

Below is an edited description (to take out identifying references) of a contract position paying an annualized \$55,000 rate in a major metropolitan area. We've highlighted the qualifications for which they are looking that seem inconsistent or unrealistic to combine in one job description.

### Key Responsibilities:

- Formulate and run experiments and campaigns to grow and strengthen community
- Create content for multiple content management systems
- Create emails for challenge followers
- Post updates and engage in conversations on social media
- Moderate comments on the community platform
- Spend up to 10 hours/week commenting on community posts to encourage and cross-pollinate participation
- Provide technical/customer support to members
- Develop community management curriculum
- Develop a framework for offline engagement around challenges
- In addition to written content, create media around challenge subjects (Types of media: video, audio;

### Basic Qualifications:

We are looking for a well-connected Community Manager who:

Has managed online communities and/or maintains a blog

Is comfortable engaging with internal and external stakeholders

Is passionate about design and design thinking

Understands the idea of open innovation or crowdsourcing

Possesses 2+ years of industry experience

Has user experience know-how and is comfortable with Adobe Photoshop/basic HTML and CSS editing

Is curious about a wide variety of business-related topics

Has demonstrated the ability and desire to understand the individuals, contexts, and interpersonal dynamics of a community

# Differentiation among roles

**While a career path for community professionals is emerging, roles will continue to evolve.**

Over time, we expect more consistent standards and definitions will emerge, enabling a career path that stays broad or dives more deeply into one area of expertise.

## Broad/Horizontal Roles

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**Community Specialist** – responsible for moderation, engagement and/or content

**Community Manager** – responsible for community programming, planning and reporting

**Community Strategist** – responsible for community strategy, analysis and coaching

**Director of Community** – responsible for program management, advocacy and team management

**VP of Community** – responsible for strategic business results

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## Deep/Vertical Roles

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**Community Architect** – responsible for the design of communities and networks

**Community Analyst** – responsible for understanding and reporting on community value

**Community Engagement & Programming** – responsible for engagement practices, training and enablement

**Community Knowledge** – responsible for content curation and management

**Community Governance & Moderation** – responsible for ensuring effective community processes and standards

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# The rise of the community executive

**Organizations with advanced community programs or where community is central to the business model will executive-level leaders.**

In 2013, Forbes published a list of 10 job titles organizations might expect to hire in the next decade. Community Executive was on this list, alongside titles like Transcultural Anthropologist, Data Storyteller and Content Archivist.

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*“The intern posting to the Instagram feed today may one day be appointed Senior Vice President, Community Management tomorrow. Currently, community managers tend to be entry-level roles, in which the main job requirements are an affinity for the brand, an understanding of social media and a customer-service orientation. Community management will become a more formal practice, requiring people with dedicated degrees and training. This function will be overseen by executives with broad experience in marketing, customer care, technology and analytics.”*

Scott Redick, Forbes

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As all communications becomes networked, community management will become the future of all management. In most organizations, those that focus on community management practices full-time will largely be part of centers of excellence. However, for a growing number of organizations, communities will become central to business models – and in those organizations, we expect to see senior executive roles specifically responsible for the productive operation of communities, networks or ecosystems.

These community executive roles will give community professionals another opportunity to advance, and more importantly will send a signal to the organization that community is central to business.

# Use this research

This research is meant to be useful and used. Here are some ideas for how to apply it.

## For Individuals

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**Evaluate job opportunities** – Use this research to understand assess job opportunities.

**Negotiate new roles** – Use this data to help frame your conversations with and educate hiring managers. Don't assume they understand the role better than you do.

**Redefine your current role** – If you are feeling overwhelmed – or underwhelmed – use this research to help redefine your role so that it is a better fit for both you and your organization.

**Get a promotion** – Are you taking on the responsibilities of a director of community but not getting the associated recognition or compensation? Use this data to show why you deserve more.

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## For HR/Hiring Managers

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**Define roles** – Better align responsibilities and compensation for community roles.

**Develop a career path** – Ensure that you are providing new opportunities for valuable employees.

**Improve recruiting results** – Well crafted job descriptions with aligned compensation will result in better candidates that are more likely to accept offers.

**Create development plans** – Use this research to help define skills and responsibility targets and review community management performance.

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# about TheCR

Advancing the business  
of community

# About The Community Roundtable

## Mission: Advance the Business of Community

1. **Champion:** Advocate for the needs of community business owners & teams
2. **Educate:** Provide training solutions to community & social business leaders
3. **Curate:** Aggregate, document & share community management best practices

## Services

TheCR Network | TheCR Advisory | TheCR Research | TheCR Training

## Leadership



Rachel Happe  
Principal & Co-Founder  
@rhappe



Jim Storer  
Principal & Co-Founder  
@jimstorer



# The Community Roundtable Advantage

## 1. Research

We publish an annual State of Community Management study, Social Executive research and have a library of 200+ best practice reports.

## 2. Experience

Our work with 100+ organizations gives us unique insight into community best practices and standards.

## 3. Access to Practitioners

TheCR Network's expertise and our collaboration with members provides unparalleled access to emerging practices and standards.

# Resources

## Articles and Presentations

[Community 101](#), [Community Manager Spotlight Series](#), [TheCR Network Member Posts](#), and [Friday Round-Ups](#) with job listings.

## Books

[TheCR reading list](#) is a collection of books and other publications about communities, innovation, psychology, leadership and business.

## Research

The Community Roundtable publishes a range of [research](#) and [Toolkits](#) as well as using its research to offer [Community Performance Benchmarks](#).

## Training

The Community Roundtable offers [training](#) for individuals as well as licensed training content for internal and external community managers.

## TheCR Network

[TheCR Network](#) is a membership-based network of community professionals, who have access to a research library, weekly programming, working groups, and professional concierge services.



THE COMMUNITY  
**ROUNDTABLE**