



# 10 Content Curation Techniques for Your Community

 **SNAPSHOT**

**SPEAKERS**

Ed Barrett ([GBTA](#)), Maddie Grant, TheCR Champion (SocialFish), Hillary Boucher (TheCR)

**COMPETENCIES**

Content & Programs

**MATURITY PHASES**

CMM2, CMM3

## TOP THREE TAKEAWAYS

This discussion highlighted an association model, but there is value for other diverse community use cases. Discussion highlights are noted below:

1. **Draw members back into the community.** Research what is popular and what is trending online and send that teaser content via email to members as a way to draw them back into the community. This is a popular strategy used by Twitter and LinkedIn.
2. **Re-targeting content is a great way to engage members.** This involves the use of Google to drop cookies on browsers to send people messages. This could be in the form of a text, a video or a banner.
3. **Ed's top 10 content curation techniques:**
  1. Promote content across all touchpoints
  2. Implement a community newsletter
  3. Foster networking
  4. Publish a magazine
  5. Integrate access from the company website
  6. Tie community to member events
  7. Promote popular discussions and trending resources
  8. Feature members
  9. Use the "SPRT" writing technique – specific, personal, relevant and timely
  10. Use repetition as a marketing tool

## OVERVIEW

1. **Ed's Background:** Ed is the Vice President, Membership and Marketing, at the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). During his tenure, GBTA has doubled its membership and launched several new membership products, including an active and growing private member community.
2. **Purpose of Curation:** Ed shared what he believed to be the benefits of curation:
  - a. To build awareness
  - b. To drive engagement
  - c. To reduce risk

## BEST PRACTICES

1. **Implement the Following Content Curation Techniques:** Ed shared 10 content curation techniques that he has used at GBTA:
  - a. **Promote Content Across All Touchpoints:** In Ed's experience if a community is in isolation – the member has to go somewhere to do something – it will lose value very quickly. The key is to embed community content into as many touchpoints as possible.
  - b. **Implement A Community Newsletter:** GBTA sends a newsletter to their members five days a week called "The Daily News Brief". They curate content from within and outside of the association. They provide a one-stop-shop for business travel news and information for members.
  - c. **Foster Networking:** The GBTA promotes what they call the "GBTA Hub", which is a new, online, members-only collaboration tool. They promote content within the Hub. After much testing, the most successful method of getting people back to the community has been the use of email. The second most successful method is access integration into the website.
  - d. **Publish A Magazine:** The GBTA has an Association Magazine that they use to help with the "push and pull" of community engagement. It surfaces content and discussions from the online and offline world and shared discussions from the community. That is placed in the magazine. The magazine solicits feedback from readers, which makes its way back into the community.
  - e. **Integrate Access From The Company Website:** This works by baking the trip wires into the site. This automatically triggers content from the community when people visit the site.
  - f. **Tie Community to Member Events:** Discussions will prompt more activity and this should be highlighted as much as possible. This technique has been successful for GBTA.
  - g. **Promote Popular Discussions And Trending Resources:** People want to know what other people are asking and what they are downloading. Share this information via email, the newsletter, etc.
  - h. **Feature Members:** Feature certain members and their activity as an example of how people use the community to improve their professional lives.
  - i. **Use the "SPRT" Writing Technique – Specific, Personal, Relevant and Timely:** Maddie shared an example of this technique. One company that she knows of noticed that most of their traffic came from the job section of their community. Knowing this, they changed their static website banner to one that featured jobs. Given that they changed this and people watched for the change, it helped to drive people to the community.
  - j. **Use Repetition as a Marketing Tool:** The marketing truism that it takes 12 or 13 times for the same message to be recognized by an individual also applies to content promotion.

## BEST PRACTICES, CONT.

2. **Consider Developing an Engagement Score:** Ed believes that this is an important part of the renewal success at GBTA. Membership organizations are responsible for not only acquiring members, but retaining them. Engagement in activities such as events and webinars generate value for the member and, subsequently, membership renewal.
3. **Re-Surface Content to Draw Members Back to the Community:** Ed explained that they look at what is popular and what is trending and send that teaser content via email to members as a way to draw them back into the community. This is a popular strategy used by Twitter and LinkedIn.
4. **Re-Target Content:** Re-targeting is a great way to engage members. This involves the use of Google to drop cookies on browsers to send people messages. This could be in the form of a text, a video or a banner. Although Ed has not used it specifically in the community yet, he has used it in other instances very successfully. It helps to generate awareness and pull people back into the community.
5. **Track and Measure:** At GBTA, they are fanatical about tracking and measuring. They have done a lot of testing to see what works and what does not work and have become smarter over time as a result. They enter each new activity with the knowledge that it is impossible to know how people will behave. They have a few educated guesses, but they rely on the data to tell them what to do next. Ed is a strong believer that if you are tracking and measuring, you will eventually find your way to an answer that is suitable for your purpose.
6. **Be Mindful of the Number of Communities and Merge/Reduce Where Possible:** There is a desire to have more finite groups centered on specific items. However, if there are hundreds of small little groups, it dilutes the conversations that could be taking place in larger groups. As a best practice, Ed recommends taking the time to pare down the quantity of groups in order to have less, more engaged groups vs. many, disengaged groups.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Hillary asked Ed who within the GBTA owns the curation process. Ed replied that it ultimately falls on his shoulders as it falls within the membership category. If the curation activities result in higher member retention rates, it makes sense to have curation fall under a membership function.
- Hillary asked Ed how much time he spends weekly and/or monthly on curation of content. Ed stated that when he first started, they had more time. As membership has grown, their other job functions have also grown, meaning that now they have less time.
- Ed was asked how he is able to ensure that people who post content follow the taxonomy that they have designed. Ed replied that they have a public resource library on the site that is solely managed by the resource librarian. He has spent a great deal of time setting up the taxonomy in advance. To maintain the taxonomy, no one else is permitted to post. People can suggest content and he decides if it meets a certain standard.
- One member shared that they have implemented a new curation initiative using volunteer hosts who act as champions/advocates of the community. It is still in the early stages and she asked if others have had success with this type of initiative:
  - In Ed's experience, he found that these advocates were quite excited initially, but it fizzled over time. It was not that they did not want to do it, but just became busy with their day jobs. That being said, there are a few people who are, despite their other duties, continually engaged. It is in their blood. Those types of individuals will, obviously, be successful for this type of initiative.
  - Hillary added that what she has observed as a best practice for trying to keep super users engaged is to put a set timeframe in place from the beginning of their tenure as super users. This way they go into the role knowing that it is only for a set timeframe and they have an exit strategy that allows them to discontinue their efforts in a positive manner. This helps keep their engagement level high for that set time period.

## LESSONS LEARNED, CONT.

- Ed was asked how they monitor what is posted. Ed explained the approach they use for their legal questions. Each time a member logs into the community, he/she must acknowledge that they understand the rules of engagement. That is the GBTA's form of legal protection because as a travel association, they must guard against any content that could be construed as a form of collusion. The airline industry and the government are very focused on anti-collusion practices. Accordingly, the GBTA must ensure that they never share information that could be considered proprietary. Therefore, that type of content is monitored and there are terms and conditions on the footers of every page.
- One participant expressed her approval for the fact that GBTA is so data focused. She wondered if their platform helped them to track their data points or if they used Google Analytics or both.
  - Ed explained that when it comes to deciding on which content to promote, they let the data tell them where to focus their efforts. They use the MemberFuse platform, which has some data within it that tells them about resources and discussions vs. individuals. Ed feels that the individual reporting could be better, so they also use Google Analytics in combination with MemberFuse.
  - They have not yet implemented it, but another tool that they use for marketing and member engagement purposes is called "Pardot". Pardot is owned by SalesForce. It is incredibly powerful and can track right down to an IP address. Therefore, what they plan to do is add that to their community tracking in order to collect very granular detail about a specific person and their specific actions. In addition to that, they will have rollup data about content and usage.
- When it comes to data, Ed recommends starting small and letting it grow. That has worked for him because he starts with a hypothesis that he validates through the data. Once that data is validated, he can show that those actions create value. With that value, he can then ask for more resources.
  - Maddie asked if the GBTA staff is very involved in the community or if they take more of a backseat approach. Ed replied that they definitely play the background role. They have tried both approaches, but members prefer them to be in the background, with the exception of the resource librarian. He has an active presence in the community. He asks questions and makes recommendations.

## **ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS**

Hillary asked participants to share what they felt to be their biggest content curation pain points:

- For one participant, his biggest pain point is the search function. He would like to help participants find content, use cases, etc., quickly and with greater ease, especially content from several years ago.
- For another participant, she would like to be able to curate content without using automatic techniques because it surfaces content that people either love or hate.
- Another participant added that manual curation involves the creation of guidelines and policies in order to choose the appropriate content to curate and highlight to users.
- Yet another participant is trying to encourage members to provide more content, particularly practitioner members. However, that is very time consuming. Fortunately, they have just hired a content curator.
- Lastly, one participant explained that her challenge is deciding how strict to be when it comes to allowing community members to submit content to communities and whether or not they should put an approval policy in place due to the fact that they have several risk policies that must be followed.