



Who's Measuring What? A Metrics Show & Tell with Olivier Le Pord

SNAPSHOT

SPEAKERS

Olivier Le Pord(Auto Desk),
Hillary Boucher , (TheCR)

COMPETENCIES

Metrics and Measurement

MATURITY PHASES

CMM3, CMM4

TAKE AWAYS

1. **Interested in learning Autodesk's top metrics?** Olivier shared his top 3 metric buckets, including the sub-metrics within each bucket.
2. **Looking for successful metrics that can be used by a tech support community?** Autodesk reports on 3 main areas, explained in-depth by Olivier.
3. **Want to know the insights inferred from Autodesk's data collection?** Olivier shared 5 key insights that are helping him to shape his focus for the coming year.

OVERVIEW

➤ **Background Autodesk.** Autodesk was founded in 1982 making it a 36 year-old tech company.

- Autodesk recently moved to a subscription model, as many tech companies are doing.
- The product is software for architect engineering, construction, manufacturing & media and entertainment.
- The community is 25 years old, which is an old community by tech standards.
- They have been using Lithium since 2009.
- Last year they had 50 million visits to the forums. This was their biggest year to date.
- They had a little over 600,000 total posts. The community is made of over 250 customer-facing forums.
- Olivier is one of 11 full-time people. They also have 6 part-time people.
- They serve 9 languages.
- They currently report to the VP of digital health and experience

CASE STUDY – AUTODESK

- **Resources, accountability and measurability.** Autodesk is facing an increasing need for insights. They have to demonstrate value to the executives. They have a sizable team and, as such, have a sizeable budget. Consequently, the executives want to know what Olivier and his team are doing with the money.
 - They also use more and more insights to improve community management. They have more stakeholders as a consequence, such as tech support in this case. They, too, ask for more and more metrics for their information in order to justify their investments in the community.
 - For Olivier, community health is about the vanity metrics. The output of the community is what interests the executives, most notably the number of cases deflected. Case deflection has become more of a metric of success, but Olivier and his team struggle with this metric.
- **What do we measure?** Olivier has metrics that he reports on regularly, metrics for which they are expected to perform to a certain level. Then there are the metrics that they monitor themselves, but they don't necessarily report them to the executives. Then there are metrics that fall under the bucket of research.
- **How do we measure?** Autodesk is based on Lithium. They rely on 2 tracks. One is the Lithium Social Intelligence tool, which is part of the Lithium platform. The other is Lithium Data Platform.
- **What do we report?** Autodesk reports on 3 main areas: customers helped, accepted solution rate and monthly engaged users.
 - Customer health is a function of the visits. The success rate is calculated by a survey conducted in the community. It's fairly stable at around 60%. The number of visits is what is monitored.
 - Accepted solution rates and engaged users is what gets reported to executives. Olivier reports on a multi-year perspective, as well as quarter-by-quarter.
- **Solutions authored.** They have many employees who are active on the forum. For a while, Olivier wondered if they were slowly killing the community by having too many employees provide solutions. After a few years of researching that concern, they have decided that they are okay.
 - They did enjoy increased growth two years ago, but this year they are not doing as well due to a community redesign. The redesign was intended for the least active users and people who search for information. That upset their super users. As a result, they saw a decrease in the number of active people in the forums starting at the launch of the redesign. Today they are starting to catch up a little bit, but it is taking longer than expected.

CASE STUDY – AUTODESK, CONT.

- **What we monitor.** Olivier shared what is most important to him:
 - Olivier always wants to know the monthly membership growth. He aggregates that by year.
 - In parallel, he also closely follows the volume of engagement, which has increased until this year. After the re-design and reorganization, they stalled.
- **Take aways.** At this point, there are a few take aways that Olivier can infer from the data.
 - Membership is not a problem. They have more and more direct subscribers. Consequently, users seek help more directly. There are a number of drivers, but Olivier doesn't feel that that is what initially attracts people. It's just that the business is growing and that benefits the community.
 - Membership is growing faster than engagement. However, the new members aren't interested in participation. They just want to read content. That spells insufficient engagement or stickiness.
 - The lack of engagement after the reorganization is still a pain point. It's more of a strategic reflection, but because of the increasing volume of questions and engagement needed, they have increased their capacity to answer questions. As a result, they have a super user program that is very active. They also have several hundred employees active in the forums. However, increasing the capacity to answer does nothing to increase the number of initial questions that the community receives. As the engagement decreases, Olivier fears that they may be in danger of an over capacity to answer questions without having the equivalent demand of knowledge.
 - There is a great deal of knowledge and answered questions in the community. Therefore, they made an effort to edit question titles to be SEO friendly. Accordingly, Olivier would like to know the degree to which they are actually deflecting questions, in addition to deflecting tech cases.
 - Up to this point, all the metrics were growing fast. But now some metrics are not growing as fast or even declining. Therefore, Olivier is focused on reshaping the story as one of his main tasks this year.
- **International aspect of the community.** Since Olivier's arrival on a specific team corresponded to an investment, he had to report to his old manager on their successes vs. an executive.
 - Non-English languages are a big focus in the reporting. By country they track the visits to the community. There is a preference from the Russian-speaking countries to participate in Russian; roughly a 60/40 split for Russian and English languages respectively.
 - A non-English pattern is typically a bilingual pattern. Olivier needed to be sure that the proportion of the traffic to the Russian forums would increase steadily.
 - They do not use a translation tool.

CASE STUDY – AUTODESK, CONT.

- **Research.** There was always interest in the number of deflection calls resulting from the community. Therefore, they developed 2 approaches that are both questionable, but one seems a little softer than the other.
 - **Macro approach - survey.** One of the main justifications for the overall investment in the community was to lower the pressure on dedicated staff from entry support calls. Lithium recommends a community-wide survey. Through that chain of questions they calculate a deflection rate. However, Autodesk doesn't use it to prove value because it feels too soft. Statistically, it's shaky. They have too few answers compared to the number of unique visitors every month, so they don't feel comfortable with that number.
 - **Micro approach - user profile.** They feel more secure with this metric. Basically, they count the threads. For every thread that they see every month, they look at who is starting the thread. If the solution was offered by the community for an entitled customer (a customer entitled to support), then there is case deflection because an Autodesk resource was spared. If it was an employee who answered the question, they don't consider that as a deflected case. This metric shows them that a little more than 1000 cases a month are deflected. That is a more solid metric.
- **For the future.** Olivier shared different areas that he would like to explore for the future.
 - **Too much data.** There is a danger to become overwhelmed by too much data. Once people get hooked on numbers and graphs, there is a temptation to want more and more without any sense of conclusion. It's a real danger to want more data.
 - **Quality measurements.** Olivier feels that they are lacking quality measures, such as the tone. Olivier can see that the overall tone of the community is degrading. More and more people are getting nasty and moderation is barely keeping up. He would like to have an automated tone analyzer or natural language recognition to measure the tone of the overall community in order to be more objective.
 - They did test a sentiment analysis tool, but it was only 40% accurate. That wasn't accurate enough to move forward.
 - **Tying community to the business.** Olivier doesn't feel that they have been very successful at tying the community to the business. For example, whether or not active users bring more revenue to the community. Olivier needs a way to tell a business story through community numbers.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The redesign was launched in April, 5 months before Autodesk experienced a huge reorganization and lost 13% of their workforce. The community was impacted. The redesign process was disrupted by several people who left the company. It was messy. Olivier doesn't feel that they did a very good job translating the needs of the top users into the redesign and have spent the last 6 months trying to catch up cycle after cycle to ensure that their biggest pain points have been addressed.
- Hillary suggested that a dip in engagement could be because people are getting their answers through searches. It could look like a negative engagement sign, but people experience more successful searches, which is a community success metric. Olivier agreed. They do see a higher number of successful searches, as well as a steady climb in solution views.
- Most of the time, there is a business strategy for opening up a language board or not. Olivier didn't have any pushback when they started a Japanese or German language board because these are big markets, especially Japan. The need for a local approach is important. Olivier has developed a model that plots the business reasons to invest in a language vs. community readiness.
- They did have a program in which 20 tech support people were brought into the community to answer questions across 20 different boards. However, they weren't sure if these people were actually deflecting cases. Olivier explained earlier that case prevention excluded employees, but they still wanted to know whether the tech support team would feel less pressure as a result of being active in the forums. It was very difficult to prove. After several iterations, they settled on a metric by which they measure an accepted solution rate. They want to have dedicated tech support people engaging in the forums, but they don't want their participation to be all about answering questions. They want them to engage in a way that fosters a sense of community, such as praising a super user who provides a good answer. Another way is to moderate a tone that is getting heated. It goes beyond just their technical knowledge.
 - They redefined engagement by defining engagement topics. They want them to be within a range of 30-40%. Ideally 35%, but that leaves plenty of room for engagement that is not about bringing technical solutions. This approach is being tested this quarter.