

# THE STATE OF COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT 2019

10<sup>TH</sup>  
EDITION



THE COMMUNITY  
**ROUNDTABLE**

Communities Ascend:  
Growing Success, Growing Risks



With support from:







# HIGHER LOGIC

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LET'S CONNECT

**TheCR Network**

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# About Our Partners

## FEATURED



Since 2008, Grazitti Interactive has been revolutionizing the way customers interact with business communities. Leveraging powerful platforms, such as Lithium and Salesforce, Grazitti has been driving brand loyalty and trust. The company's end-to-end services include building, integrating, customizing, and migrating communities.

Reliability, and innovation are the Grazitti's forte. Several Fortune 500 companies rely on Grazitti to attain their organizational goals. The company's flagship product, [SearchUnify](#), has been developed with communities in mind and installed on some of the most vibrant business communities. SearchUnify eases content discovery, provides deep insights for decision making, and enables highly personalized experiences.

Speak to [Grazitti](#), if self-service and customer satisfaction are on your mind.



Khoros offers one platform for staying all-ways connected to your customers. Within that platform is our Community solution: use Khoros Community to elevate engagement and inspire trust by giving your customers a place to share their thoughts and voice their opinions. The Khoros Community solution is different because it showcases your unique brand experience. Only Khoros offers the expertise and best practices in enterprise scale to ensure your community is as unique and vibrant as your brand and the customers who advocate for it.

Learn more: <https://khoros.com>

## PREMIUM



Igloo is a leading provider of digital workplace solutions, helping companies move beyond traditional intranets to inspiring digital destinations that improve communication, knowledge sharing, collaboration, and culture. All Igloo solutions are 100% cloud-based, mobile-enabled, and integrate with the enterprise systems and apps your business relies on.

Learn more: [igloosoftware.com](http://igloosoftware.com).



Telligent, A Verint Company, gives organizations 100% control of their online brand experience with Intelligent Self-Service solutions that drive real business results. We're the world's most flexible platform for powering innovative online communities and forums for engagement, support, web self-service and insights available as On-Premises or Cloud.

Learn more: [www.telligent.com](http://www.telligent.com).



Higher Logic is an industry leader in cloud-based community platforms. Organizations worldwide use Higher Logic to bring people all together, by giving their community a home where they can interact, share ideas, answer questions and stay connected. Our goal is to help your organization with deeper engagement and meaningful interactions for your customers.

Learn more: <https://www.higherlogic.com>



Yammer is a secure enterprise social network internal that enables people to connect and engage. Employees can share knowledge, interest, and ideas from any device. Employees can build online communities and connect with leaders.

Yammer is part of the Office 365 platform and benefits from integration apps and services, as well as control, security and compliance offered through the Office Trust Center. Companies want to enable a tool to help employees work together, while users want a tool that's easy to use. Yammer provides both, which is why Air France, Goodyear, MARS and Virgin Trains use Yammer.

Learn more: <https://products.office.com/en-us/yammer/yammer-overview>



More than ever, consumers want a voice within a community of others who all share a common interest and purpose. Vanilla Forums enterprise cloud-based community software is used by top brands around the world to help them to better engage customers, drive loyalty, empower advocates and reduce support costs.

Learn more: <https://vanillaforums.com/en/>





## All-Ways Connected

We help companies create customers for life.

Give your customers a place to connect with their peers and foster deeper connections with your brand.

Visit [Khoros.com/demo](https://www.khoros.com/demo) to learn more.

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# Elevating **Customer Experiences**

*One Community at a Time*

## Build and Maintain **Successful Communities**

Join the ranks of the organizations that have attained self-service success, increased CSAT and ROI with the communities that Grazitti built for them.

### End-to-End Community Services

- **Design**
- **Build**
- **Analyze**
- **Migrate**



**search unify**<sup>®</sup>

Powerful Search for Communities



AI-Powered Search



Personalize Experience



User-Driven Insights



# Welcome to the 10th Edition of The State of Community Management Report

All innovation starts with a feeling that something matters. That feeling cannot typically be articulated in words, but emerges in art and behavior. As the pace of life in the 20th century picked up, our instinctive behavior to connect slipped away and was replaced by the need to always be doing. Something meaningful was lost in our race to do more, more quickly.

Along came the Internet and showed us what we were losing – the impact of connecting. We were able to connect across the globe even more easily than across the street and it generated huge excitement and engagement. What followed was an unfolding show of human interactions; the good, the bad, and the ugly. The Internet allowed us to see, in black and white, how we relate to each other and, more critically, how those interactions influenced and changed our awareness, culture, and politics.

When we started The Community Roundtable in 2009 we had a hypothesis and anecdotal evidence that interactions, behaviors, and culture could be shaped actively – not through control but through design, infrastructure, leadership, and management. We knew early community managers who were figuring out how to lead communities in ways that generated shared value for both their organizations and their members. With the adoption of social software and networked communications tools, we felt that this style of management and leadership would be the future. We believed it would be what maximized the value of these new technologies.

Ten years of research allowed us to take what in those early days was a feeling – that this approach to management and leadership mattered – and turn it into data and facts about how community approaches accelerate our work, empower individuals, and create powerful feedback loops, helping organizations adapt and change.

Then why aren't all organizations racing to adopt community approaches? Building and operating successful, productive communities requires a radically different mindset – one that does not put your organization at the center. It also requires community builders who can translate what they know into the language of business, which is a big skill gap for many community professionals. Finally, it requires courageous executives willing to invest time and resources in a very different model of success, a challenging proposition even with hard data and evidence.

We're pleased with how far the community industry has come, but know there is still tremendous opportunity ahead. Thanks to the continued dedication of our members, clients, and partners we expect to see great strides forward in the coming decade. Onward!

  
Rachel Happe

  
Jim Storer

# Executive Summary

Leadership and management are evolving in fundamental ways, driven by changing access to information brought on by technology. Information and people can no longer be controlled through centralized governance structures and, at the same time, are more susceptible to being controlled through their relationships, cultures, and influences. That shift has been disorienting to both those in leadership and management roles and to individuals, as we collectively work to understand this enormous shift in how power is exerted. Communities are now seen as critical governance approaches to transform organizations and culture.

The 10th edition of the State of Community Management includes data from 325 community programs and explores how communities impact their organizations, the success they have had, and the biggest challenges they face.

## Key Findings

### 1. Communities Propel Engagement

- Communities Empower Individuals
- Advanced Strategies Enable Success
- Success Powers a Virtuous Circle

Communities empower individuals by helping them feel seen and heard, which is the foundation for feeling empowered to ask questions, solve problems, and take leadership initiative. Empowered individuals are engaged, constructive, and highly productive, all of which contribute positively to the culture and brand around them. Community approaches generate high-trust, adaptive, and engaged cultures.

### 2. Communities Transform Organizations

- Communities Advance Complex Objectives
- Communities Enable Thriving and Adaptive Ecosystems
- Community Value is Compelling

Organizations are facing complex challenges and opportunities on all sides and are building communities to address this new reality. Community structures allow opportunities and challenges to be addressed at the edges of the organization while staying in sync with its core purpose and value. These communities and community ecosystems are generating immense value by making work and knowledge transparent, accessible, and trusted.



### 3. Community Leadership is Unevenly Distributed

- Inconsistency in Roles Creates Uncertainty
- Lack of Business Skills Creates Vulnerabilities
- Advanced Strategies Address Risk

While the success of communities is exciting, with that success comes growing risks. Community leaders are often still isolated from business decision-making and those involved in business operations often don't understand communities. As communities become more integrated and influential this disconnect is creating ever greater risk. Communities are impacting organizations in a wide range of ways but they are not institutionalized, leaving them vulnerable to small changes in leadership.

## Recommendations

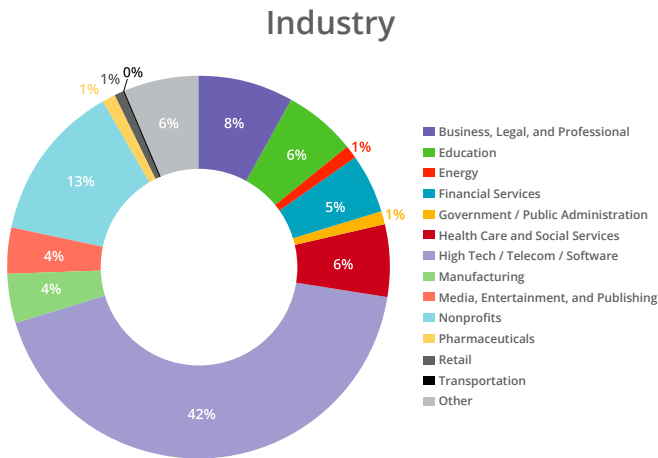
Based on these findings, we recommend organizations:

- ✓ Invest in developing an advanced, measurable community strategy
- ✓ Institutionalize community roles and commit to a dedicated community budget
- ✓ Commit to professional development for everyone with community responsibilities
- ✓ Ensure that the community team has strong program management and business skills
- ✓ Develop an ecosystem strategy and invest in a Center of Excellence

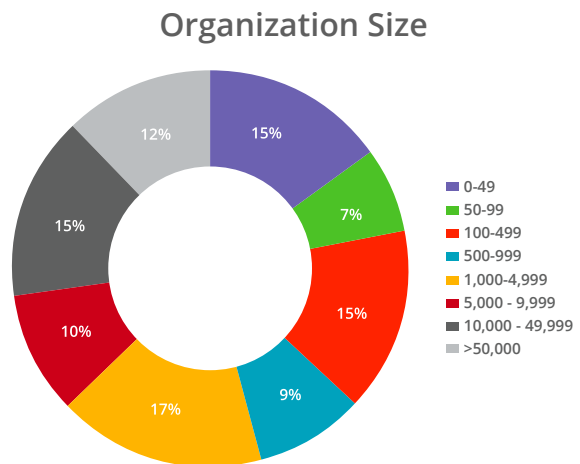
Communities are agents of change that can deliver on some of the most intractable challenges that organizations face while at the same time empowering individuals. This powerful shared value allows organizations to change rapidly, become adaptive, and operate in ways that optimize digital transformation.

# Demographics

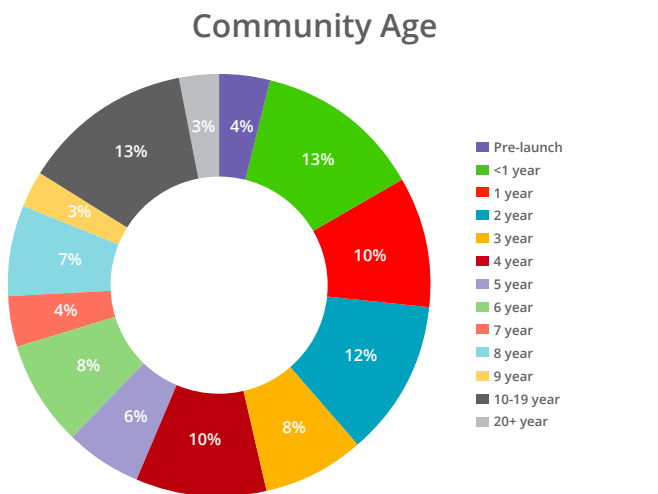
Communities that participated in the State of Community Management 2019 represent external, internal, and those that are identified as both external and internal use cases, as well as a wide range of industries. These community programs range in age from pre-launch to a handful that are over 20 years old. The following demographics break down the respondent sample for the 2019 survey.



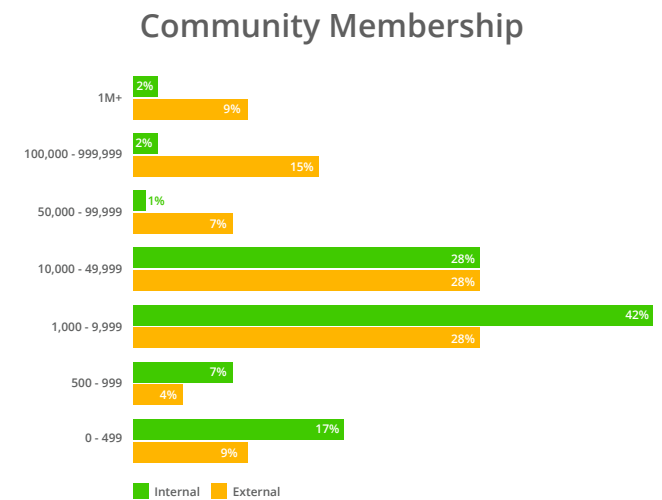
The relative distribution of industries represented in the sample has remained similar to 2018. Those identifying as High Tech continue to have the highest representation with just over 40% of the sample.



Similar to previous years, the organizations represented are well distributed between small, medium, and large categories based on number of employees.

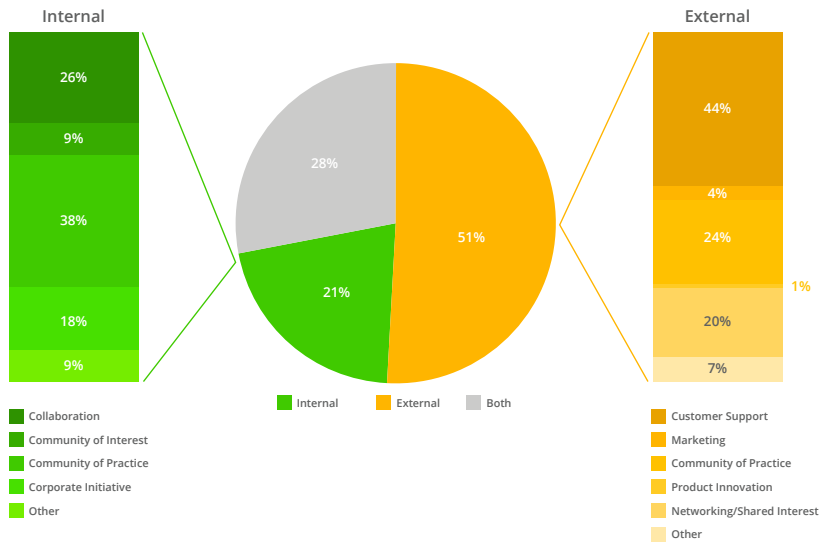


The number of newer communities (between pre-launch and 1 year of age) has decreased from the 2018 sample, but the number of older communities (over 10 years of age) is more than three times larger than in the 2018 sample, which may explain outputs like higher reported ROI in this year's research.



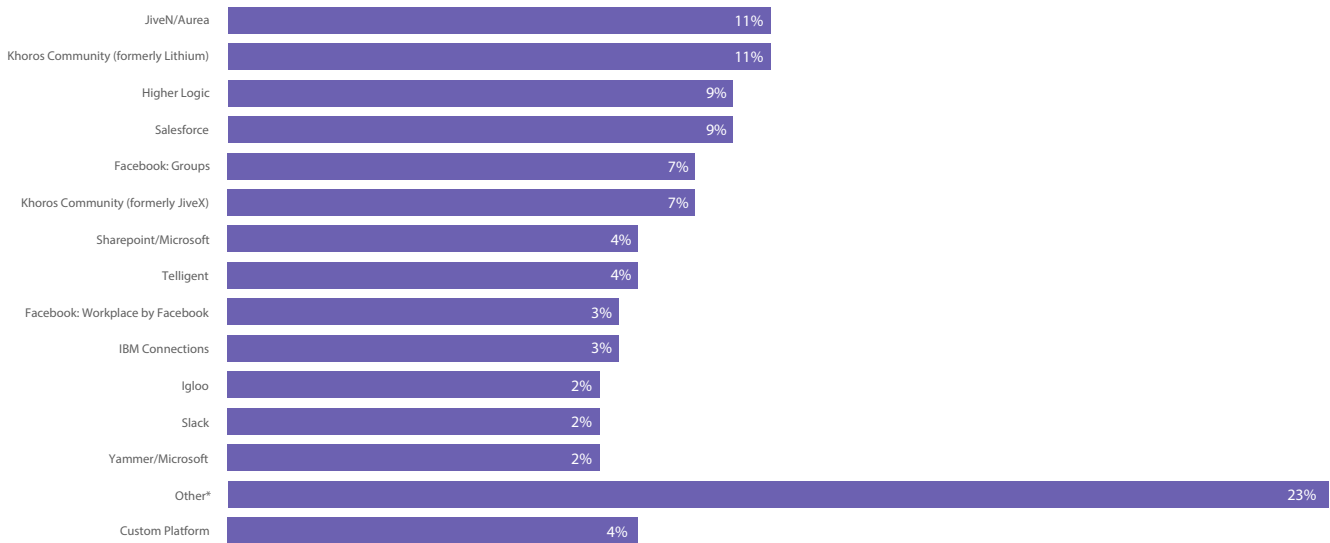
Similar to the 2018 sample, the highest reporting range of members for internal communities is 1,000 - 9,999 and external is between 1,000 - 49,999.

## Community Audience and Use Case



The use case breakdown has flipped from the 2018 sample, where 52% was internal, 29% external, and 19% both. This flip may reflect the renewed interest in customer-facing communities that we have seen anecdotally in our work.

## Primary Community Platforms



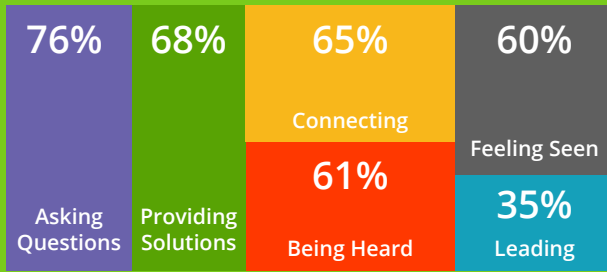
\*Other\* also includes platforms like Atlassian, Discourse, Drupal, InSided, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Vanilla Forums

We asked respondents to select their primary community platform, acknowledging that communities often span many platforms and channels. This data comes from the self-selected research sample and may not reflect the market as a whole.

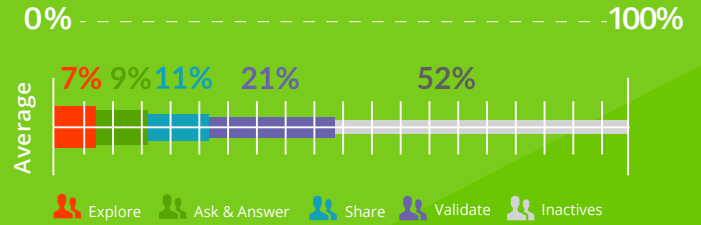


# Communities Empower Individuals

Communities empower members...

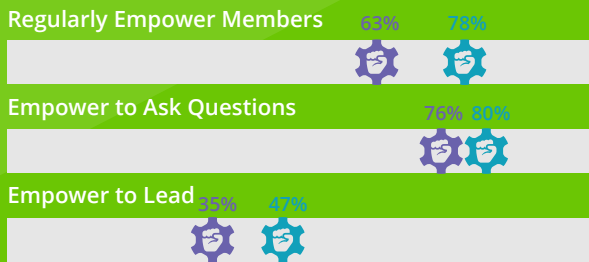


...leading to high rates of engagement.

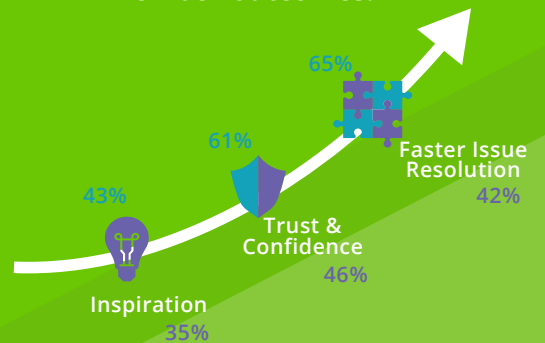


# Advanced Strategies Enable Success

Communities with advanced strategies see even higher rates of empowerment...



...and experience higher rates of member outcomes.



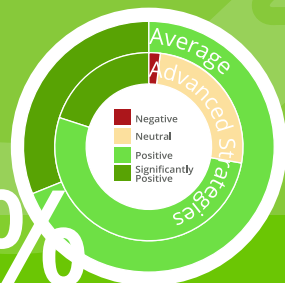
Legend: Average (Dark Blue), Advanced Strategies (Light Blue)

# Success Powers a Virtuous Circle

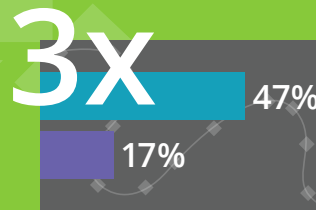
**2x**  
Communities with advanced strategies have more velocity in value growth

Communities with advanced strategies experience a range of interdependent milestones

100% of communities with advanced strategies impact their culture/brand in positive ways



**100%**



And are almost 3X more likely to have a resourced roadmap

**30%**  
of executives are ALL IN to support communities with advanced strategies vs. 23% for average programs

# Communities Propel Engagement

Communities are central to the human experience. Communities are all around each of us and whether we recognize them explicitly, they have immense influence on our reality, our happiness, and our success. The communities we engage in define norms with which we unconsciously comply, hardwired as we are to acclimate to the social environment around us. Our communities can make life for some incredibly easy and for others toxic, often because we don't explicitly see and understand their impact. How well communities are led and managed, whether by leaders assigned explicitly or by volunteers, impacts the success of both the entire community and every individual in it.

There is a tremendous opportunity for organizations to explicitly recognize the communities in their ecosystem and intentionally nurture them. This intentional leadership ensures behaviors and cultures are shaped in ways that accelerate success for everyone and limit bias and abuse. Doing so creates cultures that self-regulate, propelling positive reinforcing growth while mitigating the need for moderation and policing.

Optimizing the value of communities – for both members and organizations – requires investment in developing trust, which is one of the core responsibilities of community leadership. Trust is the foundation for empowerment, learning, constructive disagreement, and change. The ability for communities to foster trust is what makes them effective governance structures for organizations that seek agility, speed, and innovation.

## \* Suggested Reading

*Trust* by Francis Fukuyama

*Leadership and the New Science* by Margaret Wheatley

*Connected* by James H. Fowler and Nicholas A. Christakis

## Communities Empower Individuals

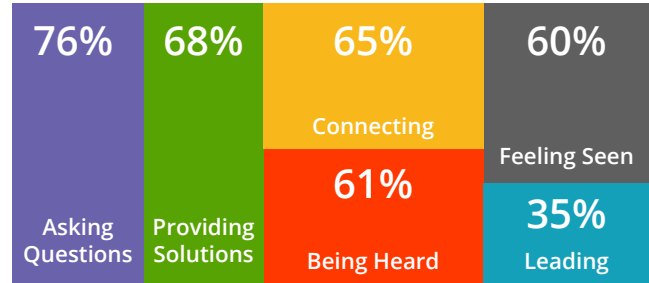
Behaviors are the repeating patterns, or fractals, that make up culture. Ultimately, culture determines what is possible economically. By looking at language and the engagement behavior it prompts, culture can be seen and measured. Does no one respond after an executive speaks? That may suggest a closed, anxious culture. Do they respond, but with defensiveness, blame, or anger? You may have a toxic culture on your hands. Do people ask a lot of questions? That suggests a supportive culture. Do people debate openly? That suggests a high trust culture, with room to challenge each other.

Organizations that understand behavior and how to influence it have a significant competitive advantage over those that don't. Organizations that understand behavior, know how to impact it, AND are trusted have even more of an advantage. Building that foundation of trust starts with empowering individuals.

63% of communities empower members frequently or all of the time. That empowerment comes in a range of forms – feeling seen, being heard, providing solutions, and taking leadership initiative. It's easy to see these numbers, nod, and move on, but empowering people to feel seen and heard is no small achievement. It is the access point for individuals to feel like they matter, are accepted for who they are, and feel like what they have to offer is meaningful. That empowerment directly impacts whether and how often they share their expertise and is the foundation for

innovation because it impacts motivation, engagement, productivity, and creativity.

### Members are Empowered Frequently or All of the Time in the Following Ways



When individuals are inspired, engaged, and empowered they fuel a self-reinforcing positive feedback loop. Success breeds success because people see engagement rewarded, increasing their comfort in engaging themselves. People live up or down to the expectations set by those around them – and their imaginations and ambitions are limited or expanded based on what they can see in their communities. The culture of a community has the power to limit or empower its members. Our research shows that, in intentionally-managed communities, members feel a high rate of empowerment – and engage at equally high rates.

**“Spark enables us to freely share our work, interests, hobbies, and even more trivial things, regardless of our titles, background or location.”**

**—Thornton Tomasetti, Community Leader**

A community leader at Thornton Tomasetti, a global engineering firm, sees this daily in the organization's internal communities.

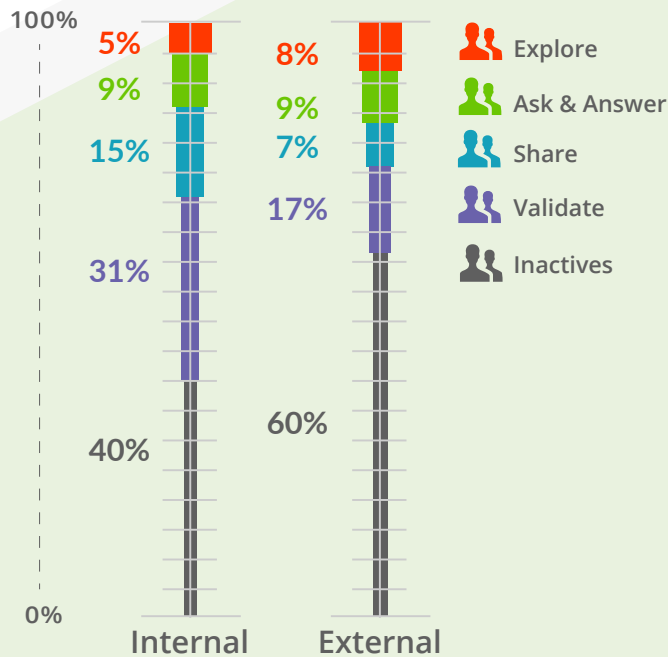


“When I first started using Spark, I saw its incredible potential for sharing knowledge and cultivating relationships across the firm. I began meeting people from all over the world and learning from their experiences and expertise. I knew I wanted more, so I became a community leader. With Spark, we now have the ability to connect, collaborate, and innovate with one another.”

results. Even more importantly, over half of engaged members do so in ways beyond simply viewing and commenting. Engagement rates do vary between internal communities, where there are lower inactive rates, and external communities where membership is more fluid. When inactive members are removed, external communities see higher rates in the higher value engagement categories, suggesting members feel freer to ask, answer, and explore. This is likely due to the structure of internal communities that operate within an existing cultural context, exerting influence on behaviors, often in restrictive ways.

These high engagement rates differentiate community approaches from more content-centric approaches (like social media marketing) and confirm that intentionally developing a community is well worth the investment.

### Communities Show High Engagement Rates



*We report engagement rates to align with the Community Engagement Framework, which can be seen at the end of this report.*

This empowerment translates to high engagement rates – engagement rates that those who work in other contexts find hard to believe. For those who work in social media, engagement rates average between .05-5% of their total followers. In contrast, almost 50% of community members are actively engaged, according to our survey

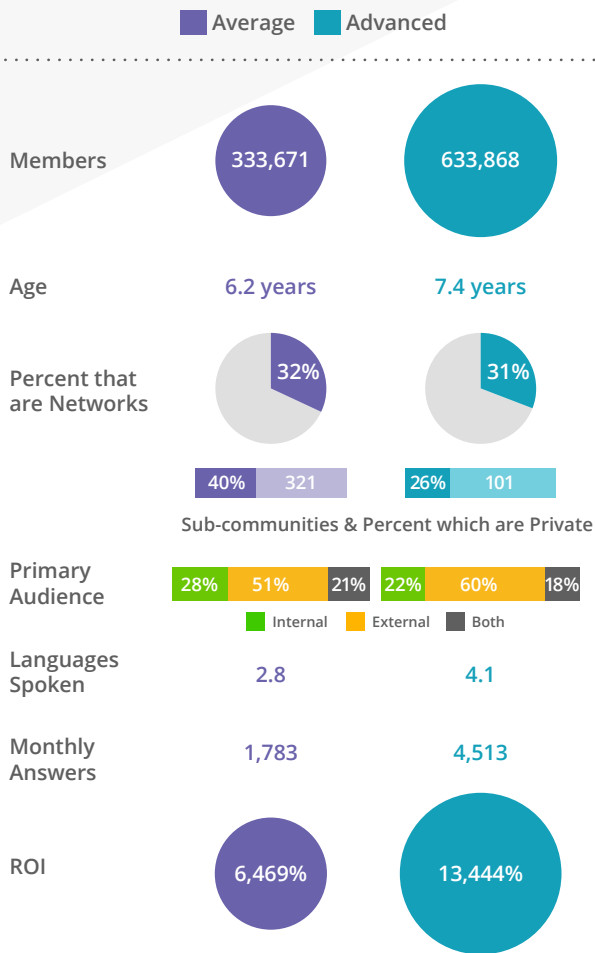
## Advanced Strategies Enable Success

Successful communities are generative, with success and impact leading to more success and impact. Community returns, by their nature, benefit more than one participant, thanks in part to the trust and transparency that they enable. This typically results in consolidated and transparent information, win-win scenarios, and high ROI.

The question for organizations embarking on community approaches or who are currently operating underperforming communities, is this - how can my community get there?

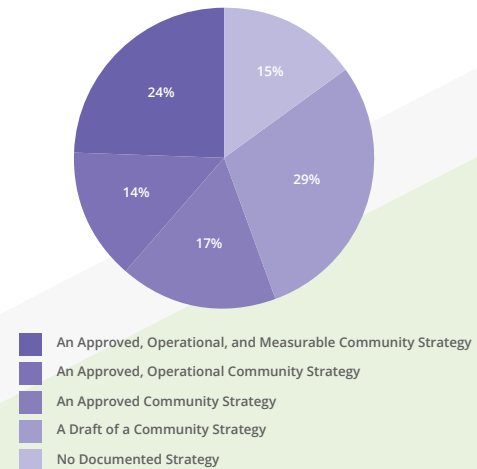
Across the data from this year’s research,

## Community Characteristics

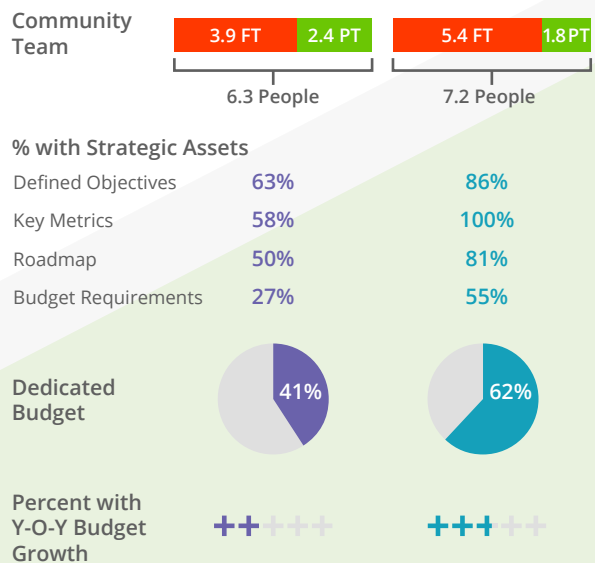


the factor that correlates to the most other success factors is having an advanced community strategy - one that is approved, operational, and measurable. Within the 24% of community programs with advanced strategies, we see a group that is able to achieve self-generating, emergent growth, resulting in compounding value. Advanced strategies can be measured but they also are more comprehensive generally, and are much more likely to include roadmaps, shared purpose and shared value statements, ROI projections, and, most critically, budget requirements.

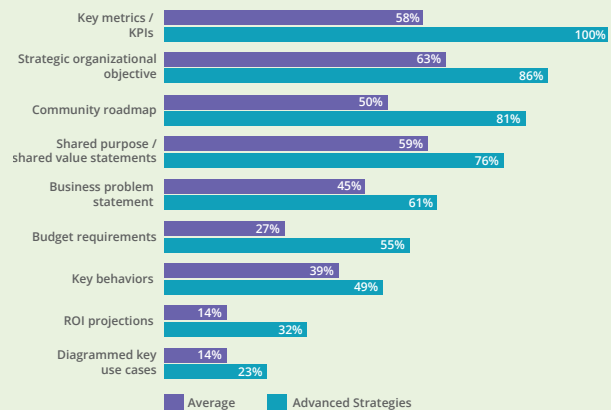
## State of Community Strategies



## Community Operations



## Elements of Community Strategies



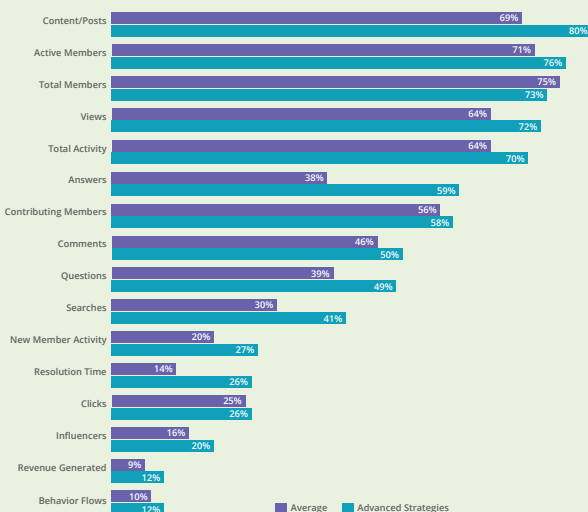
Interestingly, average communities and those with advanced strategies do not look very different in terms of engagement rates, suggesting that the quality of engagement matters as much as or more than the quantity. In many other ways, they are quite different. Despite having almost twice as many members, communities with advanced strategies are far less fragmented by sub-groups, more of their engagement is consolidated on the primary platform, and less of that engagement is hidden in private sub-groups. All of these aspects make the information more transparent and accessible, causing the communities themselves to be more valuable to everyone.

79% of communities with advanced strategies empower their members either frequently or all of the time whereas that happens for only 63% of all communities. That empowerment is particularly evident in rates of members who feel heard and feel empowered to ask questions, provide solutions, and take leadership initiative. Because members are more empowered in communities with advanced strategies, it follows that their quality of engagement

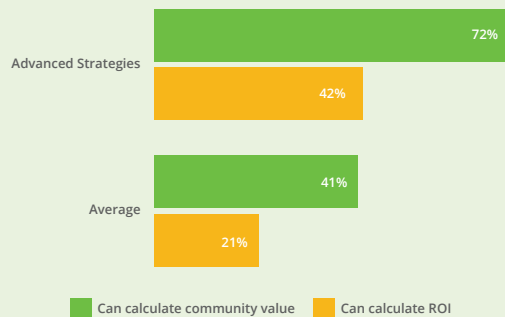
is higher than that of average communities even though the quantity is not.

As well as measuring strategic success, those with advanced strategies measure more of every kind of metric. Two metrics, however, stand out because those with advanced strategies are much more likely to measure them: answers and resolution time. Those two metrics are key to assessing community value for the organization and value for the members. 72% of communities with advanced strategies can calculate and prove their value as compared to only 42% of all communities. Of those that can calculate value, those with advanced strategies are also more likely to be able to calculate ROI. This, no doubt, is part of the reason that those with advanced strategies are more successful in securing budgets.

### Metrics that Communities Track



### Ability to Measure Value and ROI



The increased transparency in communities with advanced strategies provides more access to information and translates into higher rates of learning, development, and fulfillment for individuals AND higher productivity, agility, and innovation for organizations. An example of this win-win dynamic is how communities give remote or organizationally-isolated employees a way to connect with others, access important information, and discover what they don't



know they don't know. With an engaged community at their fingertips, they are more effective in their daily work, feel more comfortable seeking advice, and are more likely to feel confident making decisions. Collectively, this results in a significant organizational impact.

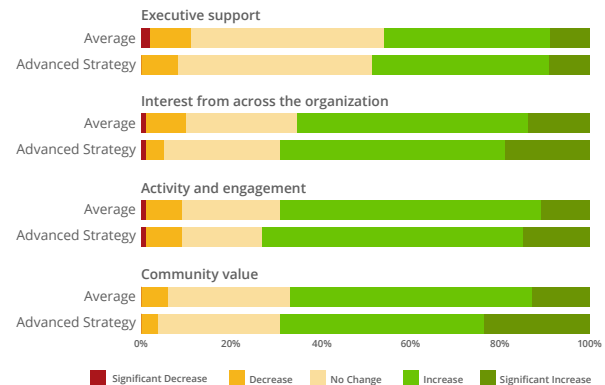
## Positive Impact Powers a Virtuous Circle of Success

The famous Alexandre Dumas quote "Nothing succeeds like success" illustrates a critical aspect of successful communities. In particular, because individuals do not always know what to expect from communities, success shows people what is possible and, in turn, tends to change their expectations and mindsets. This is true of any initiative, but especially true with communities where success is transparent. This is a critical approach in efficiently building communities. If you start as you mean to continue, showing success as you go, communities build momentum as they grow and avoid some of the biggest community pitfalls, including toxic cultures and abusive behaviors.

Looking at the rates of growth across a number of success factors, communities with advanced strategies saw more significant increases across every category. Impressively, the rate of significant increase in value was twice as high as average

communities, suggesting faster acceleration for communities with advanced strategies.

### Activity, Interest, Support, and Value Continue to Grow

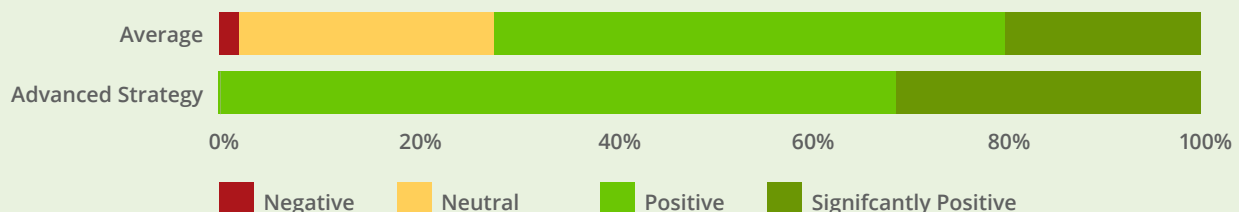


Success also shows up in a community's impact on culture and brand sentiment. All communities have a net positive impact on culture or brand sentiment. Communities with advanced strategies have no negative or neutral impact on culture and brand

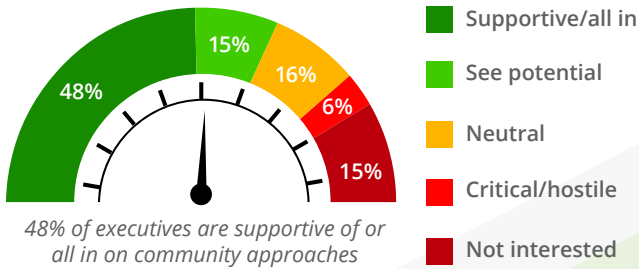
### Active, ongoing community management can mitigate ALL negative engagement risks.

sentiment. This demonstrates that active, ongoing community management can mitigate *all* negative engagement risks. That positive impact is also seen in increased interest, support, and activity. 66% of community professionals report that interest from around their organizations has increased or increased significantly over the past year.

### Impact of Community on an Organization's Culture or Brand Sentiment



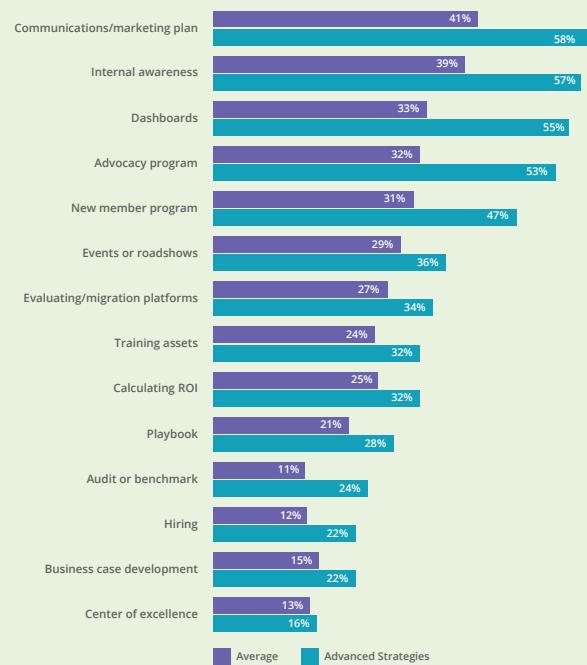
## Executive Support for Communities is High



For 70% of them, their credibility has also increased and they believe the biggest factor for this increase is that communities are more integrated into their organization. This also translates to support from a majority of all executives. 63% of all executives are supportive of community approaches, although many don't yet understand exactly what is required for success and how they can better support community programs. That lack of understanding is reflected in how executive support is expressed. 75% of the time that is verbal support, but only 54% of the time is it reflected in budget. For community programs with advanced strategies - those that are measurable - the difference is significant. While they get only slightly more verbal support (77% of the time), they get support reflected as budget 62% of the time.

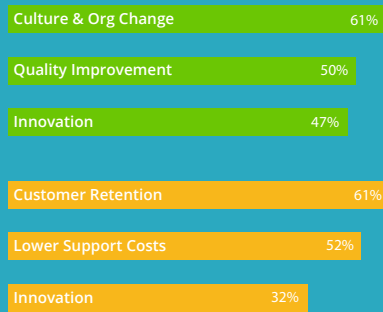
It's no surprise then that community programs with advanced strategies enjoy support from 73% of their organization's executives versus 63% for all community programs. That support translates into budget, with 47% of community programs with advanced strategies having fully-funded roadmaps versus just 17% of all programs. That financial investment results in more progress on community roadmap initiatives like communications activity and dashboards, which then leads to more engagement. These communities create a trellis of success that supports the repeating cycle of growth in engagement, positive impact, value, and support.

## 2019 Community Roadmap Initiatives



# Communities Advance Complex Objectives

Communities impact complex organizational objectives...



Communities create shared value where the organizational and member objectives overlap

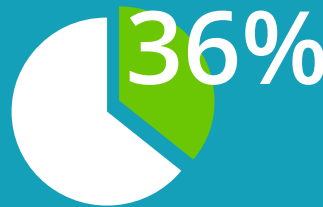
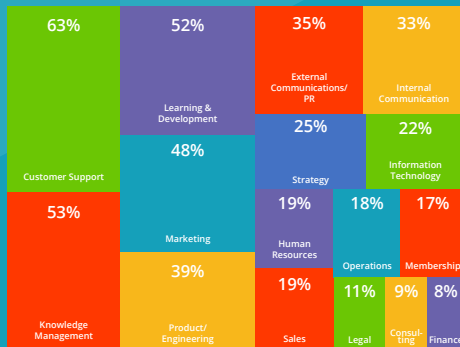
Internal External

...and complex member objectives.



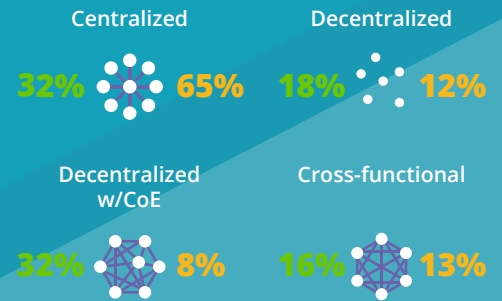
# Communities Enable Thriving & Adaptive Ecosystems

Functional Processes Enabled by Community



36% of programs include performance goals for individuals outside of the community team

Community governance is becoming more centralized



# Community Value is Compelling

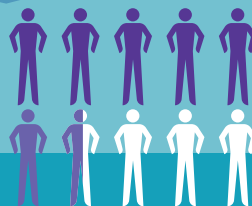
Communities Generate Huge ROI...

3,475% Internal

8,932% External

...are Receiving High Levels of Visibility

66% receive ROI data and 50% have budget approval at BOD or C-Level



...and are Receiving High Rates of Executive Support

46% growth in executive support



63% Executives are supportive



# Communities Transform Organizations

Organizations face existential risk on all sides. Technology is rapidly reducing market windows and eroding margins, customers are more demanding because they have a wealth of options, employees need new skills and expertise, and trust is decreasing across the board. Most of these challenges are complex and no one product, solution, or service will address them adequately. Complex challenges require myriad solutions delivered in a variety of ways, few of which are standardized.

To combat this complexity, organizations need a network-centric approach that removes hierarchical bottlenecks and allows information to be rapidly collected, processed, and acted on at the edges. This approach requires a dramatically different governance structure that decentralizes leadership and decision-making and empowers individuals. With this change, organizations must cultivate higher levels of trust than is required in heavily-controlled environments. Business models and mindsets need to be flipped from risk-mitigating and process-compliance to inclusion-focused and opportunity-seeking. Control, stability, and efficiency are no longer assets, but liabilities.

Community approaches are critical enablers to evolving into a network-centric operational model. For community programs, this strategic pull is integrating them deeply into the work of their organizations. The result is more people across the organization involved in community leadership, more platform integrations, more processes being enabled by communities, more governance requirements, and more executive visibility. All of that has contributed to compelling value.

## \* Suggested Reading

*Scale* by Geoffrey West

*New Power* by Jeremy Heimans and Henry Timms

*The End of Big* by Nicco Mele

## Communities Advance Complex Objectives

Transitioning to an ever-changing, adaptive, and high-trust organizational environment is enormously challenging as it requires changes to almost every area of business operations, including how we think about leadership and management. Community approaches scale trust, remove bottlenecks, and empower individuals to act on new information quickly and transparently, while enabling others to learn and maintain a shared situational awareness as things change. This incremental yet rapidly-iterative approach to change is the best way to transform an organization without destructive and abrupt upheaval.

***Community outcomes can be connected to complex business objectives like innovation, culture change, and customer retention.***

Academic Travel Abroad, a mid-size educational travel organization, has many small offices around the world and used to operate in a hub-and-spoke model wherein each overseas office would primarily communicate with headquarters in the United States, but not with other offices overseas. Their internal community changes that, and overseas offices now connect with each other regularly. The sense of connection that staff gain from the community has changed the company culture and boosted morale, particularly in smaller overseas offices.

Community programs are compelling

### Top 3 Member Objectives Provided by Communities



Networking with Peers

77%

77%



New Ideas

76%

61%



Faster Answers

74%

61%

Internal External

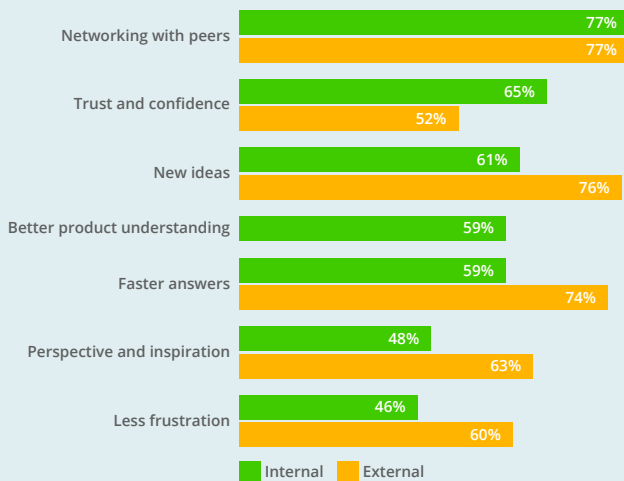
because their outcomes can be connected to complex business objectives like innovation, culture change, and customer retention. These are some of the most tenacious challenges that organizations face today, making these findings particularly encouraging and exciting.

Communities also contribute to tactical and complex member objectives, from getting faster answers to increasing trust and confidence. Our research shows that communities generate value for members that applies to a diversity of workflows and experiences, including reducing negative emotional impact, generating specific ideas, and general inspiration.

At Microsoft, the internal machine learning community periodically holds competitions in which a product team shares a real prediction task that they are trying to improve. Community members from around the company self-organize into small teams and compete to improve on the team's model—using any techniques and tools they want. Before the competition, an expert

gives a tutorial on relevant techniques and technologies, and after the competition the winning teams present their work. Any team whose model outperforms the baseline might have part or all of their solution adopted by the product team. This learn-by-doing approach allows individual community members to have impact far beyond their regular job, developing their skills and receiving recognition for their expertise. It allows product teams to draw on the broad collective knowledge of the community to improve their model performance, in a way that would have been hard to achieve without a community. The capacity of communities to make employee and customer experiences better while addressing complex outcomes for the organization makes communities a

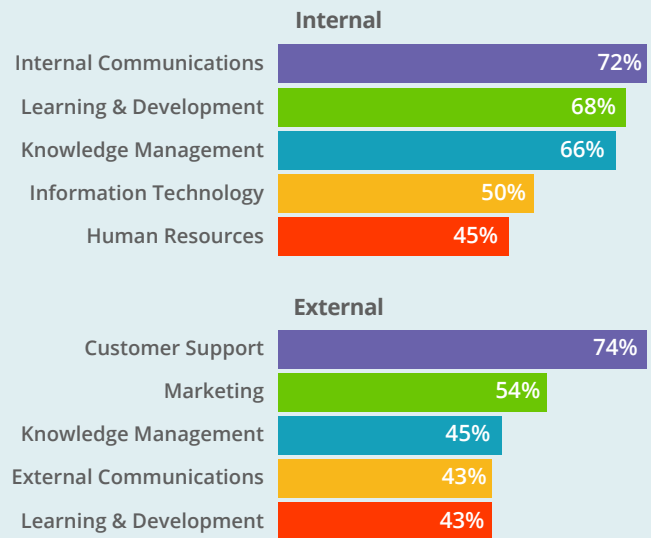
### Member Objectives Addressed by Communities



compelling approach for a wide range of functional use cases. In the process, communities help organizations move from highly structured and controlled work environments to more adaptive and

dynamic ecosystems. Communities are not just a method of better executing on one use case, but are a core governance structure that accelerate ecosystems, both inside and outside of the organization.

### Top 5 Functional Processes Supported by the Community



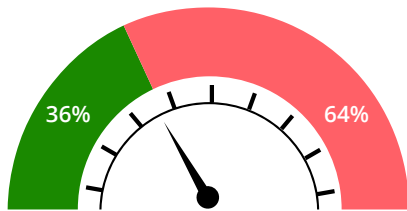
## Communities Enable Thriving and Adaptive Ecosystems

Communities are often mistaken as approaches for a single use case - and they can be successful that way. For decades, online communities used in a business context were often focused on customer support case deflection and 74% of external community programs still identify this as a functional process they support. Those community programs deliver tremendous value to organizations, but are often sub-optimized when their focus remains narrow. They are also symbolic of a legacy mindset where functions are treated discretely. This



mindset is quickly becoming outdated as organizations work to streamline the customer or employee experience, requiring collaboration and integration across functions.

### Community Responsibilities Are Becoming Distributed



36% of community programs include performance goals for individuals outside of the community team

The immense power, and great challenge, of community approaches is that they break down silos and barriers, making organizations more integrated, porous, and adaptive. In fact, for 36% of community programs there are individuals in other functional areas that have community-related performance goals. The functional areas outside of the community team to most likely have community performance goals are marketing, customer support, product/engineering, and learning & development.

Successful communities generate benefits for and require contribution from many functional budgets. That complexity is currently hard to manage successfully because most organizations operate with budgets and metrics that are rigid and discrete. However, there is growing recognition that customer and employee experiences span many functional processes and the next leap in organizational

## Community Profiles by Use Case

Internal External

### Strategy and Business Milestones

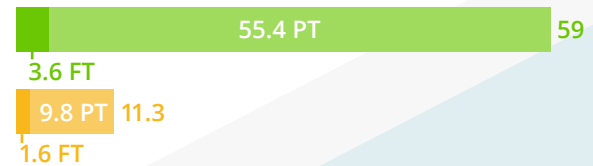
Have Advanced Strategies	18%	28%
Connect Performance to Business Outcomes	41%	55%
Can Measure Value	32%	46%
Approved and Funded Roadmap	15%	18%

### Community Staffing

#### Community Team



#### Community management resources not on the community team



### Outcomes

#### Top 3 Business Outcomes Connected to Community Value



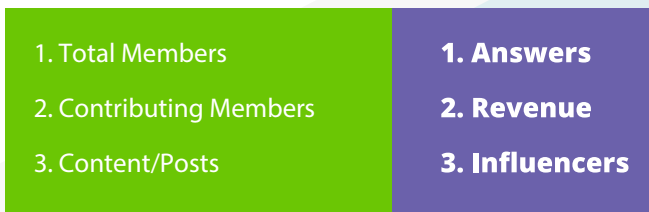
performance requires cross-functional solutions. Communities are the best and most sustainable method to integrating knowledge, innovation, and culture across silos. They deliver solutions that customers and employees are demanding, but need formal changes to organizational budgeting to be sustainable because too often community teams have to beg or borrow informally to secure the resources that they need to be successful.

### Functional Groups Most Likely to Have Community Performance Goals



According to the data, communities impact employee and customer experiences quite differently. External, customer- or market-facing communities often serve different objectives than internal, employee-facing communities. These differences impact how they are governed, built, and managed – and change the strategic impact they have on the organization. By looking at both the similarities and differences in the use cases, we are able to see how versatile and adaptive communities can be.

### Metrics Most Differentiated by Use Case



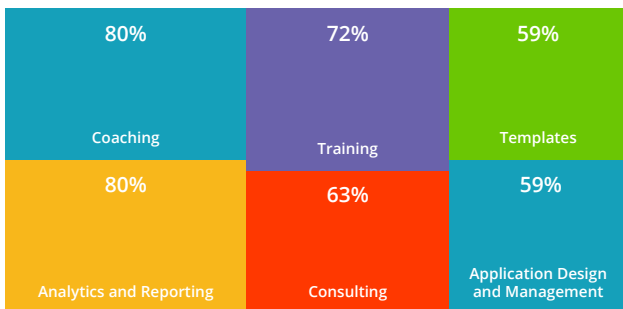
Some community dynamics hold true across all use cases. Universally, communities increase empowerment, engagement, trust, and address complex business opportunities. All communities in our research share similar profiles of executive support and funding – and struggle to secure more resources and investment as they grow.

One of the emerging trends we see is the presence of robust community ecosystems that are made up of hundreds or thousands of communities. 40% of internal community programs are responsible for a community ecosystem, while only 26% of external community programs run ecosystems. Interestingly, 45% of sub-communities in internal ecosystems are private spaces, while only 29% of external ecosystems are made up of private sub-communities suggesting more sensitivity to transparency inside of organizations. The fragmentation and cultural sensitivities within internal- or employee-facing communities is markedly different than in external- or customer-facing communities.

Regardless of their primary audience, community ecosystems need hundreds (or thousands) of individuals to facilitate the different communities within them – resources that no community team has. To be successful, community teams need

to engage, empower, and train individuals to take on community management and leadership responsibilities, often through influence alone. This is extremely challenging with limited resources, especially if community teams are effectively acting as a center of excellence without the explicit responsibilities, budget, and associated staffing, a trend we identified starting with our 2018 research.

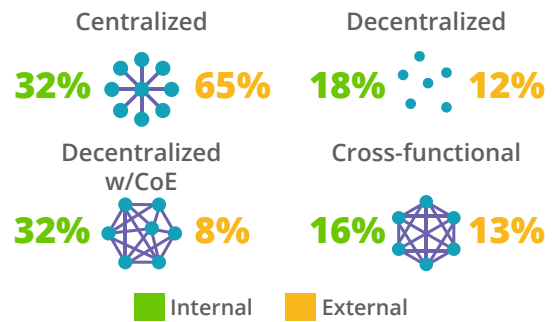
### Services Offered by Centers of Excellence



We see the rise of community leadership centers of excellence. In fact, according to this year’s research, it is now one of the two most common governance models for internal community programs. The center of excellence model is typically tasked with general network strategy and architecture, as well as providing services, support, and training to staff providing day-to-day community management. For organizations that have a community center of excellence, the most common services they offer are coaching, analytics and reporting, and training.

The Canadian Medical Association, which advocates for quality health care across Canada, sought to transform its engagement model and with it, its business model. By

### Community Governance Structure



building an ecosystem of communities, they hope to change from engaging a small fraction of their members to empowering and making it easy for any member to engage. This makes health advocacy easier, more transparent, and more inclusive. Its center of excellence model delivers various services to different communities within its ecosystem and provides a bridge between top down strategy and emergent leadership. These growing ecosystems, along with growing community leadership capacity, are helping organizations transition from rigid, functional, and defined ways of working to more fluid, collaborative, and adaptive ways of working.

**“The CMA Community allows us to say YES to everyone.”**  
*— John Feely, Vice-president, Community and Member Engagement, Canadian Medical Association*

## Community Value is Compelling

Communities are complex and ever-changing. In the real world, they are challenging to see in aggregate and, therefore, almost impossible to measure.

Online, however, we can see how communities form, change, fragment, divide, and dissipate. That allows us to communicate community dynamics, value, and impact.

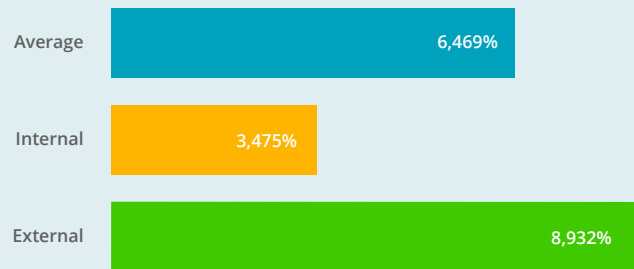
Some community value is still easier to see because it is direct. Getting support, advice, and answers offsets more cumbersome and resource-intensive methods because communities are quite efficient at matching and exchanging value between those who need it and those who have excess capacity. That value is what we can measure most easily and translate into financial results because it has a direct impact on the cycle time of a workflow. While other community outcomes, like the value of having empowered employees, cannot be translated into financial terms, we must recognize that it exists and contributes to overall organizational performance.

An example of direct value comes from a global manufacturing company where 70% of the staff - mostly sales and support professionals that are on site with customers - work remotely. Because of their isolation, it can take years to develop an efficient internal network that they can use to resolve the issues they see on a daily basis. By providing an internal community focused

on products or solution areas, they no longer need to know who to ask - or spend hours getting introductions from those they do know. The community has a direct and significant financial impact for the organization and its clients, who can quickly get issues resolved and continue their work.

The Community Roundtable's Community ROI Calculator focuses on this direct value, and looks specifically at answers because they are the most valuable engagement output we can easily measure. This model yields a highly credible view of a community's value.

### Community ROI



**Based on average monthly:**

Community program cost = \$28,514

New answers = 1,783

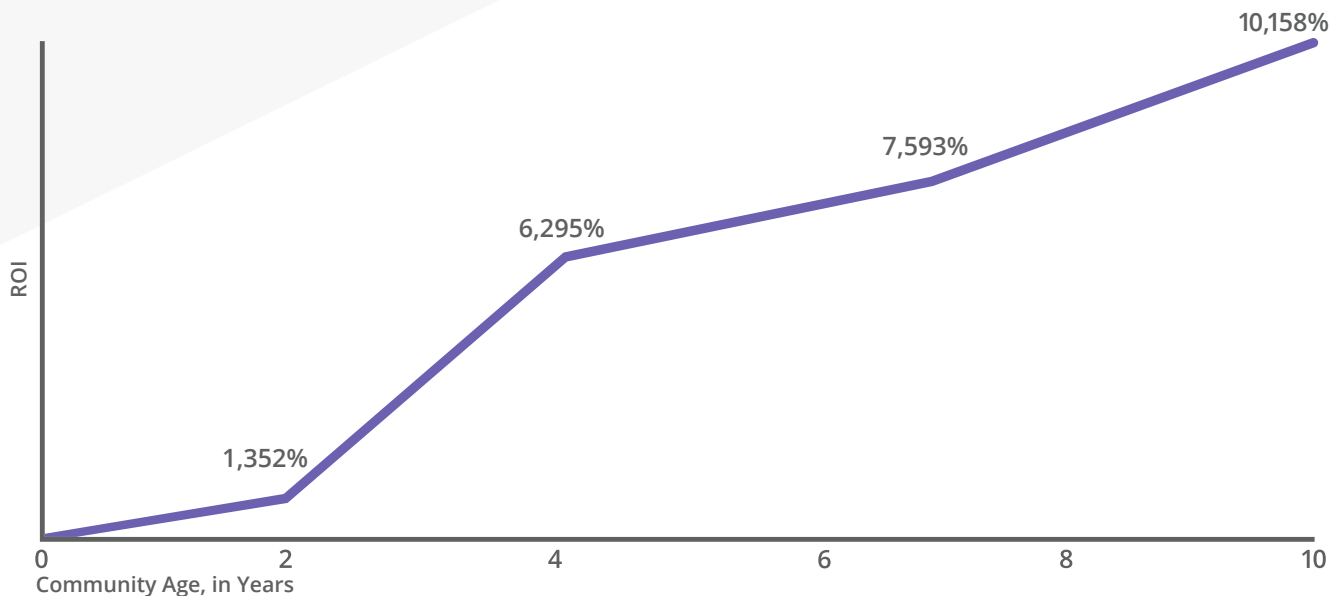
Accessed answers = 15,133

Average value of an answer = \$143

Community programs generate the kind of value you might expect for the high levels of engagement they engender, in the process demonstrating how the transference of trust supports engagement at scale. While internal community programs show a lower ROI, they are on average smaller in size and their business objectives are typically more indirect, making a bigger percentage of their overall impact harder to measure in financial terms.



## ROI, by Community Age



Looking at ROI by community age helps understand not just the average ROI, but how value grows in communities. While every community may have a different path to ROI, well-managed communities tend to follow a similar curve. Value grows slowly at first, then rapidly accelerates, and finally plateaus as the shared purpose and its associated knowledge matures. This curve is very similar to the well-established S curve pattern of innovation and helps make the connection between community approaches and innovation. Finally, this ROI curve suggests that, like innovation programs, older communities may need to revitalize themselves with a new shared purpose or be content evolving into a more static knowledge base.

Successful communities are generative, with success and impact leading to more success and impact. Any investment into a community returns benefits to more than one participant because of the transparency,

creating win-win scenarios and growing ROI.

While ROI is inspiring, the indirect value of communities is even more compelling.

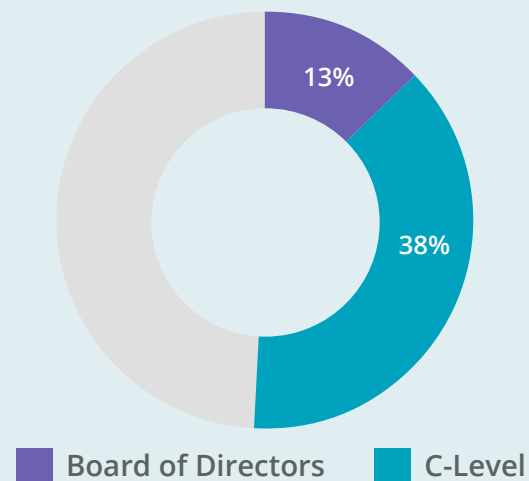
For Analog Devices, a global semiconductor company, their customer community EngineerZone® has delivered value to internal staff in surprising ways. A relatively new technical expert found that by responding to a customer's questions in the community, it not only helped the customer (and other customers that will find the answer in the future), but also helped the expert gain knowledge and technical experience - invaluable to building their credibility. This is an excellent example of the type of shared value that communities generate.

Empowering members, improving the quality of work, innovating, and norming new behaviors in ways that increase trust and agility are all outcomes of community that happen over time in a complex interplay of validation, content, and dialog. Communities allow understanding and meaning to be co-created, and this evolving conversation, paired with the empowerment to act, makes community approaches one of the most effective means to changing culture and transforming organizations. Instead of telling individuals how to change, communities support individuals in a way that allows them to learn and grow, bringing them along and inspiring them to change. In the process, this reduces friction by decreasing anxiety and with it, resistance.

This ability of communities to fundamentally transform organizations is getting the attention of senior executives. Over 50% of community program budgets are approved by either c-level or boards of directors and, of those programs that can calculate community ROI, 66% share it with executives. This is a lot of visibility for relatively small teams within large organizations.

The growing impact and influence of communities has generated high levels of visibility and support for community programs. Success leads to more internal support requests and more credibility, but not always significant increases in resources. This dichotomy creates new vulnerabilities as the gap between growth, value, activity, and the resources to manage it widens.

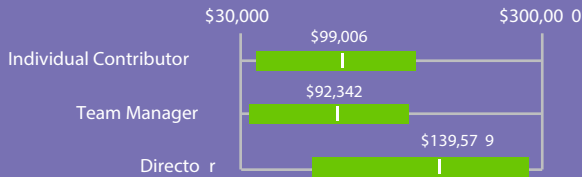
### Communities Get Budgets Approved at High Levels



# Inconsistency in Roles Creates Uncertainty

Roles and salaries are inconsistent and community leaders are still often isolated, contributing to high rates of burnout.

Only **25%**  
of community roles are approved by HR  
————— Inconsistent salaries —————



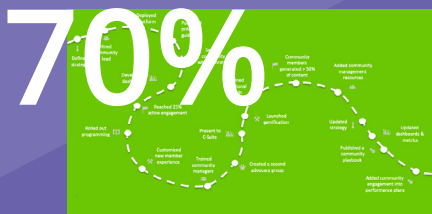
**34%**  
are a team of one



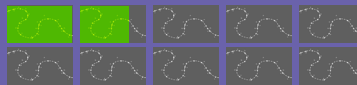
**50%**  
are highly burnt out

# Lack of Business Skills Creates Vulnerabilities

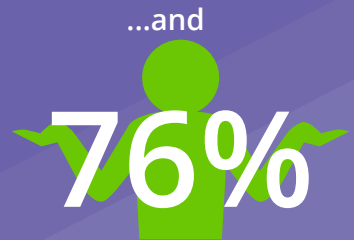
Despite only 24% seeing business skills gap...



...of community programs do not have an approved roadmap



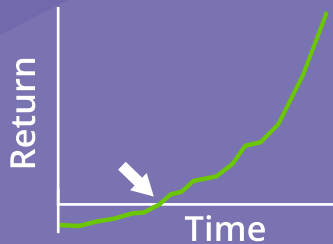
...only **17%**  
have a resourced roadmap



...and **76%**  
of community programs cannot measure their strategy

# Advanced Strategies Address Risk

**33%**  
Programs with advanced strategies recognize the need for business skills vs. **24%** of all programs



Communities with advanced strategies are **2x**  
as likely to be able to prove value

Those with advanced strategies are almost **3x**  
as likely (**47% vs. 17%**) to have an approved and resourced roadmap



# Community Leadership is Unevenly Distributed

William Gibson famously penned, “The future is already here — it’s just not evenly distributed” and that accurately reflects the current state of community leadership.

There is a growing consensus that our collective view of what great leadership is needs to change for a hyperconnected and complex world. This message is coming from a variety of sources including Brené Brown, the MIT Center for Collective Intelligence, Simon Sinek, John Hagel, Charlene Li, and many others. This emerging leadership approach is called many different names, but they all include an emphasis on empathy, trust, engagement, and purpose. It is interesting to see the convergence of this perspective coming from technology, social sciences, business, government, and education - and indicates a tipping point in how society views leadership more broadly.

Community roles are a natural training ground for developing these emerging leadership skills.

Community leaders have no direct authority to tell people what to do. Instead, they create productive, engaged communities through influence, connection, and design. The best community leaders effectively employ empathy, trust, shared purpose, and shared value and have expertise in communication, social sciences, technology, and business. From a human resources perspective, this is a high bar and one that requires a deep diversity of experience to realize.

***Community leaders have no direct authority to tell people what to do. Instead, they create productive, engaged communities through influence, connection, and design.***

## \* Suggested Reading

*Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown

*The Engaged Leader* by Charlene Li

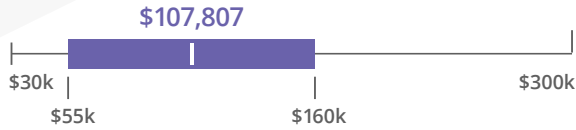
*The Power of Pull* by John Hagel



## Community Roles



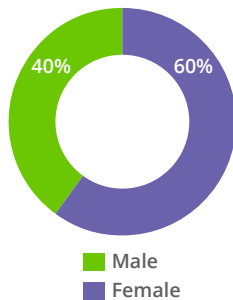
## Compensation



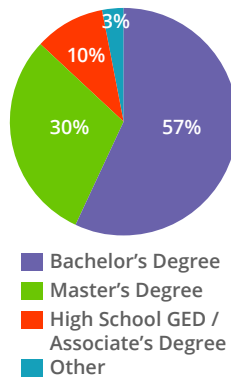
## Years of Experience



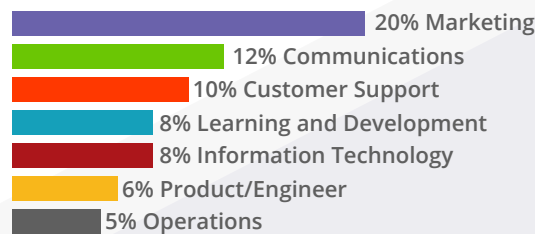
## Gender



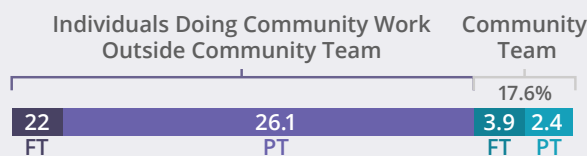
## Education



## Functional Backgrounds



## Work Context



## Profiles of Emerging Community Leaders

Community roles have long been misunderstood as positions “merely” requiring social skills and the ability to interact. In fact, they neither represent just one role nor are they simple. Great community leadership is mostly hidden work focused on enabling others to interact constructively in service of creating agile and collaborative cultures. This approach is far from easy to learn and community roles are more complex than most knowledge jobs because they require a deep understanding of people and power as well as the ability to make decisions in constantly shifting situations. Community leadership employs influence and enablement to inspire and ensure people are rewarded for new behaviors. To do well, community leadership requires metacognition - the ability to understand one’s own thinking, how it differs from others, and how to bridge that divide. Community positions often require many adjunct specialties like strategy or content or are infused with expertise in one specific domain.

Community leaders typically come from a range of functional backgrounds, with the most common being marketing, communications, and customer support. The rest come from a variety of functional areas including product, strategy, communications, legal, sales, HR, consulting, operations, and even finance. This reinforces the fact that community building is a method of approaching any work versus the goal of work - and the best organizational communities are built to achieve a business

objective. In fact, this is how many people come into a community leadership role - they identify a community approach as a better way to do the functional work that they have historically done.

Given the complexity of community leadership, it is no surprise that the community professionals we surveyed had an average of 17.6 years of work experience and 6.3 years of community experience. The vast majority of community professionals have a college degree and a significant number also have a master's degree. That earned them, on average, \$107,807 in total compensation with a base salary of \$98,569. Within the data, however, is a wide range of salaries, suggesting that job roles and salaries vary quite a bit. This is likely due to industry and geographic differences, but also suggests a lack of standardization and rationalization, which we see anecdotally. Because community leadership is an emerging field, those being hired often know more about the role, its demands, and its objectives than the hiring and HR managers. This dynamic makes it a challenging field for both the people hiring and the people being hired.

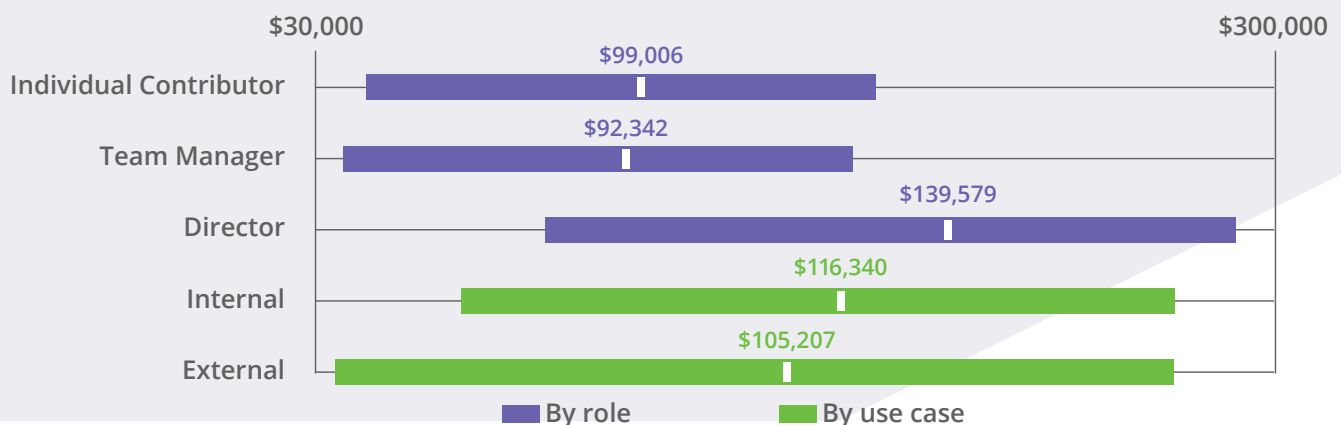
Community leadership is a discipline that some people do professionally, but many people use as an approach for performing other roles. As networked communications replace legacy models, the community skill set will become more important for all organizational leaders. This research primarily captures the details of community professionals - from individual contributors up to directors and vice presidents.

### Inconsistency in Roles Creates Uncertainty

Community roles are more differentiated than they were just a few years ago, but they still lack consistency and rationalized salaries. Our sample includes individual contributors all the way up to vice presidents and over a third of community teams include more specific roles, including community analyst, community strategist, and community engagement specialist.

Salary ranges show inconsistency between responsibility levels and a huge range within each level. Some of this inconsistency is due to geography, company size, use case

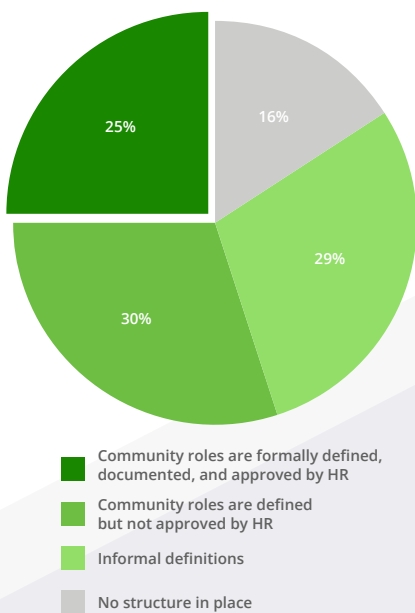
Salaries for Community Roles are Inconsistent



\*bars represent standard deviation

and industry, but it also calls into question how well rationalized job descriptions are with compensation. Because community leadership has moved from an implicit responsibility to an explicit role and its value has only recently become clear, organizations are still grappling with the implications. Only 19% of organizations have a clear career path for community professionals and only 25% have community roles that are formally defined and approved by their HR departments. This suggests that refining community job descriptions would help reduce uncertainty and its related risk – and provide clear expectations for community professionals themselves, 36% of whom point to issues of clarity or confusion as their top frustration.

### Governance Structure of Community Roles



Looking at salaries across responsibility levels and by use case, we see that managers, on average, make less than individual contributors. This is likely due to

the number of community professionals that are still a team of one, representing 34% of this year’s sample. In the case of the solo practitioner, they act as moderator, manager, strategist, and program lead requiring a high level of proficiency in more areas than the manager of a team of moderators might have, for example. While that may explain the salary disparity, it also suggests a suboptimal use of expertise and it may also explain how many individual contributors can jump into director-level roles in other organizations. In aggregate, this inconsistency in role definition makes it hard to understand who to hire or what jobs to pursue. For the 75% of community teams that do not have roles defined and approved by HR, doing so would go a long way toward contributing to a better employee experience.

Given the lack of formalized and rationalized roles, it makes sense that only 8% of community leaders trained specifically for a community role. For that group, the majority of the training was in masters programs like the Masters of Learning and Organizational Change at Northwestern University or the Masters of Science in Information and Knowledge Strategy at Columbia University.

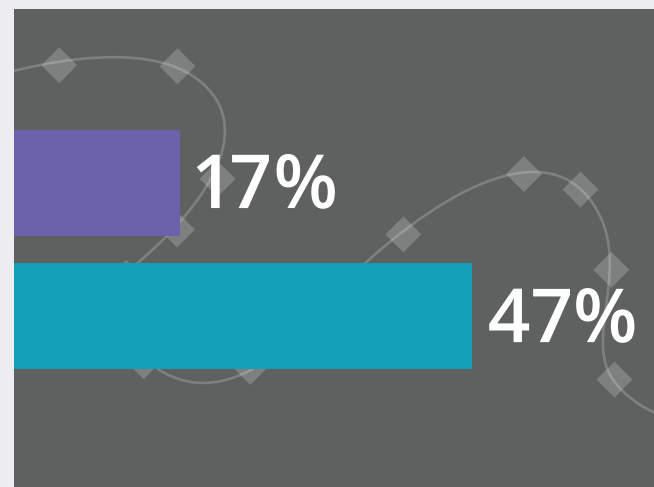
While many community professionals are still on teams of one, the average community team is now six individuals, four of whom are full-time. Surprisingly, the size of a team currently does not show consistent correlation to use case, the number of members in a community, the ROI of the community, or the sophistication of community strategy. This indicates there is little rationale in staffing to fit the needs or value of the community and suggests that staffing still relies on ad hoc support,

that may just be one enlightened executive who believes in the promise of building community.

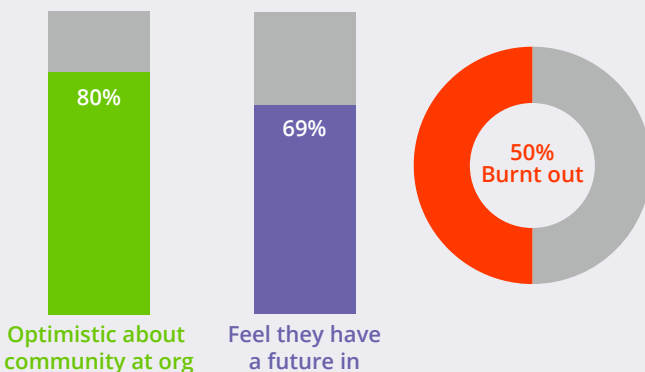
This disconnect further reinforces that community roles are not well rationalized – and justifying new headcount relies more on persuasion or vision than on responsibilities and results. This implication is further reinforced by looking at the disconnect between growth in value and the resulting increase in staffing and resources. 67% of community programs saw an increase in value and 70% of professionals report that the perception of their credibility and value has increased, yet only 34% of community programs saw any increase in staffing. Additionally, only 49% of community professionals have been promoted, despite that increase in value and credibility. Not surprising then, when asked about their biggest frustration, community leaders identified lack of resources. Community value is growing significantly, but resources and compensation is lagging behind and often never materializes. This incongruity needs to be addressed by organizational leaders.

This inconsistency is weighing heavily on community professionals who are both incredibly optimistic and incredibly burnt out. A full 50% of community professionals experienced a high degree of burnout over the past 12 months. At the same time, 69% see a future for themselves as a community professional and 80% are optimistic or very optimistic about the future for community at their organization. The fact that community leaders are more optimistic for the future of the communities they facilitate than for themselves is troubling and needs to be addressed.

### Community Programs with Advanced Strategies are Almost 3X More Likely to Have a Resourced Roadmap



While Community Managers are Optimistic... ..They're also Burnt Out.





## Lack of Business Skills Creates Vulnerabilities

70% of community programs lack an approved roadmap and only 17% have a resourced roadmap - a number that has not budged in the past year. Addressing these gaps requires business skills in the areas of program, budget, and resource management.

The disconnect between the value being generated by communities and the stunted support to sustain those community programs suggests that community leaders and their executive sponsors should be laser focused on closing that gap. However, when we asked about the biggest skill gaps on community teams from among engagement, content, strategy, technical, and business skills, business skills come in last. This is a major blind spot for community leaders, who are unable to see that this lack of rationalization, clarity, and support are because their teams lack business skills and therefore, resources.

This business skills blind spot is a growing issue as community programs get more integrated into their organizations. Communities, and the teams that run them, influence tens or hundreds of thousands of employees and customers, report success up to the executive suite, integrate a wide range of people outside of the community team in the management of the community ecosystem, and respond frequently to requests from across their organizations. Collectively, this suggests that community teams are overwhelmed with “business management” tasks. Community teams, however, only spend 9% of their time on business management - in spite of this growing cross-organizational complexity

and impact. This influence without structural support further increases risk, especially when there are staffing changes.

Community professionals’ top frustrations are lack of resources, unclear direction/ lack of strategy, and lack of executive understanding - all of which also require business skills. Additionally, the three biggest gaps in community strategies are in diagramming key use cases, projecting ROI, and defining budget requirements. These too are best addressed with business skills.

### Top Frustrations for Community Leaders



The business skills blind spot of community leaders is a growing risk for community programs that are now more entrenched in the way organizations work. While they generate a huge amount of value, they are particularly vulnerable to the departure of a small set of individuals whose roles have not been institutionalized or rationalized. When any organizational program cannot measure its value, communicate its impact, institutionalize its operations, and link to business outcomes, it remains vulnerable. Community programs are no different with one critical exception - they tend to have immense hidden influence that is often poorly understood and not recognized until

it goes away. This opens organizations up to large, visible, and complicated failures, which often come as a surprise.

## Advanced Strategies Address Risk

As with all programs, as value grows so too does risk. Using communities to address complex business opportunities is moving from an innovative approach to mainstream adoption. As this continues, more business processes depend on them, more individuals are engaged in them, and more people are dependent on their performance. Executive stakeholders are now overwhelmingly supportive, but they need to back up their verbal support with tangible financial investments. We recommend starting with investments in advanced strategies.

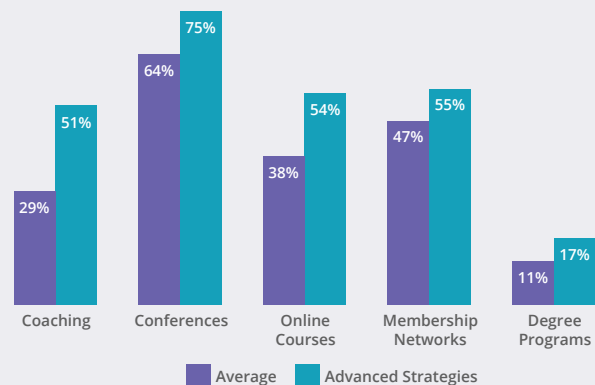
It is instructive to look at the 24% of community programs that have advanced strategies. For that segment, they are similar to average in many ways – in their engagement rates, how they prioritize business skills, and the time they spend on business management. Tellingly, however, when asked about their biggest skill gap 33% of those with advanced strategies identify business skills versus 24% of all community programs. Looking at the components of their strategies, they are much more likely to include every element, but are twice as likely to include budget requests and almost three times as likely to have resourced community roadmaps.

Those programs with advanced strategies are also seeing big differences in performance. They are twice as likely to have seen significant

## How Advanced Strategies Impact Community Leaders

	AVERAGE	ADVANCED STRATEGIES
Team Size	3.9 F/T 2.9 P/T	5.3 F/T 1.8 P/T
	<b>6.2</b>	<b>7.1</b>
Have a mentor	<b>20%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Mentor others	<b>56%</b>	<b>72%</b>
Have been promoted	<b>49%</b>	<b>58%</b>

### Training



Organization has clear career path	<b>19%</b>	<b>39%</b>
Can prove community value	<b>41%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Have an approved & funded roadmap	<b>17%</b>	<b>47%</b>

increase in community value over the last 12 months, more likely to be able to connect community impact to strategic objectives, twice as likely to be able to calculate ROI, have a significantly higher impact on culture and brand sentiment, and more frequently empower community members.

For community leaders, having an advanced strategy correlates with a higher likelihood of having a mentor, being promoted, receiving every type of professional development, and having more full-time members on the community team. Despite that additional support, those professionals also face a slightly higher degree of burnout and still identify lack of resources as their biggest frustration. This may be because they are generating almost twice the ROI of average communities, with only slightly more resources and support.

***As communities expand their impact beyond the community to transform their organizations and how work gets done, the need for general business skills grows.***

Community leaders need to recognize their business skills gap and learn how to ask for the resources, training, and support their community program requires. They need to identify and hire or partner with strong business program leaders. When communities were isolated and supported only a small handful of specific business issues, it was sufficient to focus on issues internal to the community itself – member engagement, content, and community strategy. As communities expand their impact beyond the community to transform their organizations and how work gets done, the need for general business skills grows. Community leaders who want to grow with their communities need to acquire the business skills to keep up.

# Recommendations

## Actions for Executive Stakeholders

### 1. 70% of community teams lack an approved roadmap

- Initiate discussions with the community team to understand how their communities have changed and how they expect community growth and needs to change in the future.

### 2. Communities with advanced strategies are 2x as likely to be able to prove value

- Invest in developing a measurable strategy and getting it approved and operational.

### 3. Only 24% of community teams acknowledge a business skills gap

- Provide professional development for the community team, particularly in business skills.
- Mentor community team leaders on business and operational approaches.

### 4. Only 25% of community roles are approved by HR

- Initiate conversations with HR and Finance so community leaders can help institutionalize roles and document community value.

### 5. 59% of community teams lack a dedicated budget

- Secure a dedicated budget for the community program to ensure its sustainability.

## Actions for Community Leaders

### 1. 70% of community teams lack an approved roadmap

- Develop a roadmap of what you believe you need to improve community performance – and use it as a discussion tool with stakeholders to build a budget.

### 2. Communities with advanced strategies are 2x as likely to be able to prove value

- Continue to educate yourself and stakeholders with research and case studies.

### 3. Only 24% of community teams acknowledge a business skills gap

- Identify a business mentor that can help navigate organizational operations and decision-making approaches.
- Advocate for your own professional development.

### 4. Only 25% of community roles are approved by HR

- Write a job description and get agreement on your role and responsibilities.
- Practice setting limits as a way to educate stakeholders on what is reasonable.

## What's Next?

A few years ago, when we predicted that the future of all leadership is community leadership, people generally didn't even make the connection that the skills being honed by community professionals might apply more broadly.

Our research makes it clear that this transition is happening. Communities are becoming a core governance structure for getting work done, adapting culture, and innovating. Community structures give us opportunities to lead in a new and more effective way – energizing individuals, empowering them, and challenging them to be their best without the controlling and power-heavy methods of the past.

As community approaches spread across more organizations, they are shifting and transforming culture, decision-making processes, work habits, measurement approaches, and professional development pathways. Without good strategy and design, this can increase friction and create confusion, inconsistencies, and changes to the balance of power that are unexpected – all of which hamper performance and potential.

Executives can harness the potential of community programs by:

- Investing in an ecosystem strategy and design
- Developing community leadership center of excellence
- Including HR and Finance teams into ecosystem strategy and operations

No individual can do this alone. Organizations need to blend what executives know about running a business with what community leaders know about crafting engaged cultures and designing for behavior change. Community leaders need to decide whether they are ready to take on business leadership opportunities, which come with new responsibilities and accountability that can be intense.

Community professionals can tackle this opportunity for business leadership by:

- Pursuing business skills through training, mentorships, fellowships, and reading
- Partnering with a program manager or executive
- Building cross-functional relationships to understand the other roles and functions

Building strong partnerships between business leaders and community leaders will be required to maximize the potential of communities to transform organizations. As that happens, community teams will grow and include more specialized skills to support their impact. We've seen these partnerships be the key to institutionalizing community approaches and maximizing their value.



## How to Use this Research / Acknowledgements

The Community Roundtable's research aims to provide immediate value to executives and community leaders by capturing the current practices and evaluating the strategic value of community management.

Use this research to:

- Validate your approach
- Prioritize your resources
- Identify gaps & opportunities in your program
- Build a roadmap
- Justify budget requests
- Inform conversations with stakeholders
- Educate staff

Community program leaders have leveraged The Community Roundtable resources and research to build roadmaps, provide internal consulting, and shape community strategy.

The State of Community Management 2019 would not be possible without the support and advice of the members of the SOCM Working Group from TheCR Network.

Research is a shared value in TheCR Network and these members stepped up to:

- Review and give feedback on the goals and timeline
- Raise issues and opportunities for insightful new and revised questions
- Explore issues related to specific aspects of the 2019 survey
- Support and advocate for participation from community professionals across the globe

The input and counsel of the skilled and experienced members of TheCR Network helps ensure this report and the insights derived from it are as practical and useful for community practitioners and program owners as possible.

### TheCR Network 2019 SOCM Working Group



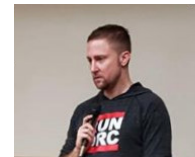
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*Project Management Institute*



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**Peter Broadley**  
*CSA Group*



**Christopher Detzel**  
*Imperva*



**Heidi Hume**  
*Worldwide ERC*



**Olivier LePord**  
*Autodesk*



**Sarah Mahon**  
*AECOM*



**Jeff Ross**  
*Humana Inc.*

**THANK YOU!**

# Methodology

The data published in this report was collected from 325 community programs between January and March 2019.

As in all previous reports, members of TheCR Network helped shape the research survey and approach through a working group. Every year, a working group of members helps us define the research scope, identifies opportunities to dig more deeply, and provides feedback on the research instrument, and then helps us prioritize the data points that are the most valuable to practitioners. This collaboration has allowed us to continually improve the scope, delivery, and depth of the research.

The Community Roundtable research team collaborated with TheCR Network SOCM working group to develop a comprehensive survey that would measure what and how community practitioners think and feel about their place in the community space at this current time. Once the survey was opened, it was shared within both The Community Roundtable and its broader network.

This led to a self-selected group of survey respondents, and our demographics reflect that. This survey does not necessarily reflect overall industry trends, but it does show and explain what this portion of the community management space is experiencing.

Once the survey was closed, The Community Roundtable’s research team conducted data cleaning and analysis and collaborated with TheCR Network SOCM working group to discuss trends and key findings. The product of that collaboration is the report that you are reading right now.

## The Community Roundtable’s Research: Documenting and Defining the Value of Communities and Community Management



# TRANSFORM YOUR ORGANIZATION

For a decade, we've helped global organizations achieve their collaboration, change management, and community goals.

The Community Roundtable is the most trusted voice in community management.

Using the industry's only comprehensive research - the State of Community Management - as a framework, we help community leaders define, launch, manage and measure effective community programs.



"The Community Roundtable is an excellent thought leader and the gold standard and has made an impact on me in my work for many years."

Mary Maida, Medtronic, Inc.



"The resources The Community Roundtable provides are amazing."

Maria Ogneva, FinancialForce




"The Community Roundtable has been a major force for advancing the community field."

Jeff Ross, Humana

# The Community Maturity Model: Measuring Community Management Maturity

Community management has been an implicit responsibility of leadership for as long as humans have cooperated to govern themselves. Communities have always been hard to measure because of their diversity, complexity, and emergent nature. Online, however, the dynamics of community came into focus and allowed us to understand how communities formed, developed, and evolved. This led to the more explicit role of the community manager and the discipline of community management.



	1 Hierarchy	2 Emergent Community	3 Community	4 Networked
Strategy	Competitive	Reciprocal	Cooperative	Interdependent
Leadership	Directive	Engaged	Influential	Inspiring
Culture	Resistant	Contributive	Supportive	Collaborative
Community Management	Absent	Encouraging	Mentoring	Empowering
Content & Programming	Structured	Responsive	Emergent	Co-created
Policies & Governance	Rigid	Restrictive	Flexible	Inclusive
Tools	Ad hoc	Defined	Integrated	Adaptive
Metrics & Measurement	Transactional	Experiential	Behavioral	Strategic

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The Community Maturity Model defines the eight competencies and four stages we feel contribute most to the development of a healthy, productive, and trusting community. This version of the Community Maturity Model is new in 2019, reflecting a decade of research in the updated descriptions.

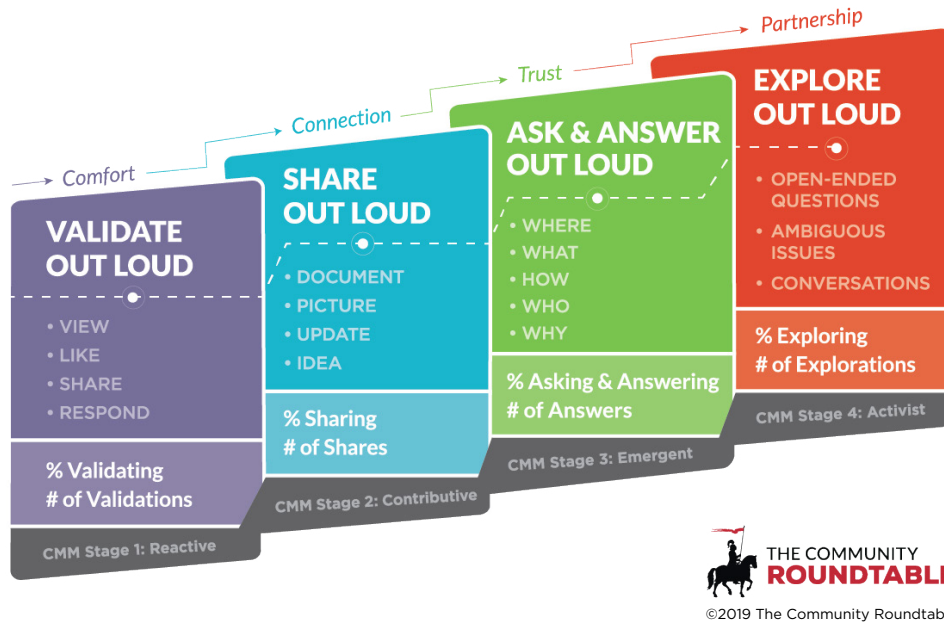
## ***Our clients use the Community Maturity Model to:***

- Train and educate stakeholders on the requirements of good community operations
- Assess their community approach
- Develop a roadmap and budget for their community program

## ***At The Community Roundtable, we use the competencies of the Community Maturity Model to:***

- Organize our content and programs
- Structure client work
- Educate and deliver training assets

# The Community Roundtable's Approach to Measuring Engagement and Value



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

Throughout our history, we have focused on measuring the impact of communities, which we can see through engagement. Over the years, it's become clear that organizations do not really understand the dynamics of engagement, how to deconstruct and measure it, and how to tie engagement to business outcomes and value.

We developed the Community Engagement Framework to help do just this and it helps to:

- Deconstruct and categorize the range of engagement behaviors
- Connect ideal engagement objectives based on business objectives
- Link behaviors with qualitative outcomes: comfort, connect, trust, and partnership
- Identify how to measure the depth and breadth of engagement types
- Translate engagement to value and calculate ROI

Using this framework to measure engagement and track how it changes over time allows organizations to see how trust is changing in their organizations and markets. Are people more or less likely to ask questions and explore, requiring trust in the social environment?

This framework concisely articulates what we've learned working with hundreds of clients. You can download a high res version of this framework here:

<https://the.cr/engagementframework>





THE COMMUNITY  
**ROUNDTABLE**

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**TheCR Academy:** <http://the.cr/TheCRAcademy>

**TheCR Library:** <https://thecrlibrary.com>