



Top Takeaways on Community Careers: All About The New CCC Research



SNAPSHOT

SPEAKERS

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COMPETENCIES

Strategy

MATURITY PHASES

CMM1, CMM2, CMM3,
CMM4

HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Want to know which numbers stood out to Jim the most?** Jim shared which 4 numbers spoke to him from the Community Careers and Compensation (CCC) Research Report 2020.
2. **Interested in the key findings from the CCC Report?** Jim shared several key findings, including 9 sub-findings and a few added suggestions.
3. **Want to hear some lessons learned by others on the topic of community careers?** Participants shared 4 key lessons learned.

OVERVIEW

- **Background.** Jim presented his top takeaways from the CCC Research Report 2020.
- **CCC by the numbers.** Jim pulled out 4 numbers from the research that he felt spoke to him the most.
 - **Team composition.** Teams generally consist of a little over 6 people; some full time and some part time. That's across all use cases. However, Jim looked back at the 2015 Report – then titled *The Community Manager Salary Survey* – and the numbers looked off. So, he dug a little deeper into the research and discovered that it was heavy on the external side. There were a lot of social media platforms in use at the time. Over 40% claimed that their community platform was either Twitter or Facebook. Therefore, some of the numbers – full and part time – were a little bit higher in 2015 due to the social media component. There were a lot of people managing social media within various organizations at that time.

OVERVIEW, CONT.

- ***Percentage of community teams moving away from a solo practitioner.*** In 2015, 40% of community teams had 2 or more full-time people. In this most recent round of research it has increased to 66% of respondents. This is a fairly large number that now denotes a completely different way of working. Jim remembers back to when TheCR consisted of just himself and Rachel. As the team grew, they had to learn how to manage the work differently.
- ***Percentage of community professionals who have been promoted.*** In 2015, 36% of people reported that they had been promoted in their role. That is now up to 63%, which is great.
- ***Percentage of community professionals who have seen their organizational value increase in the last year.*** Approximately 70% of community professionals have seen their value in the organization increase over the last year. That is a telling tale for where the role is headed in this industry and pairs nicely with the point above re: promotion.

BEST PRACTICES

- **Understand the key findings in the report.** Jim shared his top findings – which included the sub-findings – from the 2020 CCC Report:
 - **Community teams expand.** As community teams expand, certain factors will follow suit:
 - Growth in staff + growth in value = growth in stress.
 - Community teams are in transition.
 - This means that it's an evolving profession.
 - From the most recent research, as mentioned above, there are 6 plus people – full and part time – who make up the community team. The ROI is off the charts and, not surprising given what community professionals are doing and what will be shown later in the report, a little more than 50% are reporting burn out.
 - **Suggestions:**
 - **Multi-tiered advocacy programs.** Jim and Rachel have been advocating multi-tiered advocacy programs – both internal and external – as critical programs for the survival of community professionals in order to reduce burnout. It helps organizations to scale their teams and it helps them to obtain more resources for what needs to be done on a day-to-day basis without costing the organization any more money.
 - There are many resources for building advocacy programs for both employee advocacy and customer advocacy within TheCR Network.
 - **Contractors and consultants vs. full time staff.** This is another way to stealthily increase your team or increase bandwidth without full time staff.
 - **Develop palatable ROI figures.** Over the top ROI figures are not digestible for executives. Translate them into hard dollar savings that show what the community is producing for the organization. That is far more valuable in the long run to obtain the resources needed to scale.

BEST PRACTICES, CONT.

- **Community roles diversify.**
 - New roles, new opportunities.
 - Emerging career paths.
 - Increasing professional development options.
 - Defined career paths for community professionals are 2X more likely at organizations with advanced strategies. This suggests to Jim that more work is needed to define strategies, a huge and necessary factor for acquiring more resources.
 - Coaching is a differentiator for organizations with advanced strategies – 51% vs. 29% respectively (on average). Therefore, it's important to create one-on-one opportunities for people to learn.
 - On average, 51% of community professionals mentor others. That goes hand-in-hand with the mentoring that happens within the organization. What's interesting is that the research revealed gaps in community professional's skills, specifically business and strategic skills. This means that community professionals are not being mentored at near the same rate that they are mentoring.
 - **Suggestions:**
 - **Multi-level training.** Develop or license multi-level training to bring community team members and advocates to a level baseline while establishing a career growth strategy.
 - **One-on-one coaching.** You can include the one-on-one coaching sessions here. An example that might work in this scenario is a cafeteria plan so that people can choose what they want/need. Include this in your community manager training programs as part of a bigger strategy.
 - **Reverse mentoring.** Community professionals in this set of research replied that strategy skills were the second most important skill, yet they spend the second least amount of time on them. This is an opportunity to create what Jim referred to as "reverse mentoring". The people in the organizations that are really good at strategy probably aren't thinking about community, but maybe they should be. Perhaps there are some use cases where it could help them expand the organization's strategy. Developing reverse mentoring relationships would be very valuable.

BEST PRACTICES, CONT.

- ***Scale creates challenges and opportunities.***
 - Community leaders have visibility and attention.
 - Changing visibility of communities introduces new challenges.
 - Community professionals remain optimistic. Jim is encouraged by this last sub-finding.
 - Centers of Excellence (COEs) are much more prominent with internal community programs. TheCR sees them as critical for all. Jim sees a push lately for helping community professionals think about Centers of Excellence within community programs. TheCR sees this as critical.
 - Proving community value tends to be a step in the right direction towards getting an approved and fully funded roadmap. Jim saw in the research that if you have an approved and funded roadmap, one of the things that you were doing well was proving community value. That goes back to the ROI statement discussed earlier.
 - On average, what Jim saw was that only 17% of community teams have approved and funded roadmaps. TheCR thinks that the real gap here is the business skills discussed earlier. It's necessary to ramp up those skills with either reverse mentoring or one-on-one coaching.
 - If you haven't started building a Center of Excellence, it's time. In 2020 you need to do it. If you have one, it's time to start thinking about how to level that up. Adding in a cafeteria plan or one-on-one coaching opportunities for people within community management and/or developing opportunities for reverse mentoring all get bundled into a Center of Excellence in Jim's opinion.
 - Work with business leaders to develop the ROI. If you haven't, it's time to do this, as well. Again, translate this into something that is tangible to an executive. They're all about the pocketbook. Business and strategy skills will help here, as well. It's very important to get these skills on your team in order to help articulate a strategy and then translate it into a roadmap. If you don't have these skills, find them in others and/or develop them yourself.

LESSONS LEARNED

- One participant asked for suggestions for how to carve out time to strategize when she can't even get through the day-to-day tasks. She has a requisition in for 2 FTEs to help give her some breathing room, but the organization is also re-structuring and her boss was just promoted. She doesn't want to move forward only to move backwards with all the changes happening in the organization. As well, she wants to ensure that her goals coordinate with the goals of her leadership.
 - Jim offered a broad-brush suggestion around strategy. When the resources are acquired, clearly articulate which big projects they will be used for and how these projects will be tackled as a team. Explain how the team will function. Be forward thinking about how the additional resources will be used in order to ease executive concerns.
- Implement job descriptions. This will be helpful when asking for resources, but will also help you to examine your role and how you want it to change with the addition of community resources.
 - Jim was pleased that the job descriptions were helpful in the CCC Report. Another participant added that the job descriptions up-leveled this report from the last one. The job descriptions can be helpful in building the roadmap and validating with executives the need for certain roles as backed by the research and what other successful companies are doing.
- There was some discussion on where to best fit community within the organization, i.e. which department should community report to. Anecdotally, Jim feels that corporate communications is a good fit and this is where he has seen it the most within organizations. However, it depends on the use case and whether the community is focused internally or externally, whether it's geared towards customer support, etc.
- One participant stated that the Center of Excellence point was very well taken and her key take away. She had already been thinking along those lines in terms of what she needs to accomplish in 2020.
 - Jim added that this might dovetail with the earlier participant's challenges. When Jim thinks back, the biggest task on any community manager's plate that didn't really rise to the surface of their responsibilities per se was evangelism to help others understand what they did and how community could be leveraged elsewhere. Done well, a COE can help to take some of that off your plate. You can create evangelism podcasts that could be published back to the COE. People can listen to how community is leveraged in other parts of the organization while they are in the car or travelling, etc.

LESSONS LEARNED, CONT.

- Be cognizant that COEs may exist by other names, but still have the same function. This is particularly true for external vs. internal communities.
 - TheCR has many resources on building COEs and will actually be re-launching a cohort dedicated to this task.

RESOURCES

- As mentioned in the discussion: [Community Careers & Compensation 2020 Report](#)