Higher Logic's Framework for Building a Successful Online Community

As community builders, we believe the future of community looks like building digital spaces that serve customers in a multitude of ways. This is what we call a success community, and it is a place that provides people with the tools, knowledge, and connections needed to succeed. You may be thinking, but where do I start?

We recommend starting with a specific goal or use case, and then as your community matures, adding more. To get started, follow the steps below.

1. Define your goal(s). What are you trying to achieve?

☐ Increase customer success efficiency   ☐ Increase revenue opportunities   ☐ Identify advocates more easily

☐ Reduce ticket submissions   ☐ Increase brand awareness   ☐ Improve product adoption

☐ Improve gross retention   ☐ Gather more product feedback   ☐ _____

2. Select a community type that best aligns with your goal(s).

Type of Community	Description	Potential Outcomes	Example of Metrics to Track
Support	A place for members to get help from their peers and your company and provide access to self-support tools.	• Reduction in tickets • Faster response times • Lower support costs • Reduced workload on CS teams	• Number of accepted answers per month • Time to resolve • Accepted answers generated by members
Product	A space for people to share feedback on products and ideas to create a product that resonates more with customers and the market.	• More product suggestions • Readily identify issues • Better products • Understand user needs better	• Number of ideas submitted • New ideas implemented or accepted • Pain points identified
Customer Enablement	A type of support community to enable customers on how to use the product (e.g., onboarding), access your best practices, and share learnings with others.	• Better onboarding • Higher adoption rates • More satisfied customers and higher retention • Reduced workload on CS teams • Reduced time to value	• Number of articles in the help center • Number of courses taken • Number of best practices shared • Active users • % of overall customers in community
Advocacy	This online community is focused on only those MVPs (Most Valuable People) who will go out into the world and are brand loyalists.	• Higher number of identifiable advocates • Increased brand awareness • Positive reviews	• Number of positive reviews generated • NPS/CStat score • Growth of # of active ambassadors
Community of Peers	Relies on the network effect. Becomes a space for people with a common belief of improving their business and themselves.	• More conversations • More engaged customers • Information exchange • Brand loyalty	• External community • Positive comment to discussion ratio • Net new vs returning members (time compare)

3. Launch and drive engagement with your community to achieve success.

Tip: If you're starting your community from scratch, engaging your super users and MVPs to gather some initial feedback and build content is a great first step. If you already have a community or recently launched one, follow our tips below to engage new and existing members.

Step	Goal	Tactic
Acquire New Users	Drive people to your community to create new users and include more perspectives.	• Use CTAs (call to action) to communicate the value of community and get people to sign in • Make community the hub for other resources • Conduct email outreach to customers who don't have any members in community • Send newsletters with engaging community content • Introduce community during the onboarding process
Engage Existing Members	Get users to engage with the community, whether it's by posting, answering questions, reacting, or providing feedback.	• Create a content calendar and produce quality content consistently • Leverage your platform's community digest • Send "we miss you" messages • Gamify the experience using badges • Host office hours or virtual events • Send a newsletter to community members
Create Advocates	Have users generate content, including thought leadership, tips and tricks, and use cases, and speak to the quality of your product.	• Implement advanced gamification tactics, such as ranks or leaderboards • Feature users of the week/month • Host joint events with customers or partners

MATURITY QUIZ

	Just Getting Started	**Getting the Hold of Things**	**High Achiever**
Type of Community	Support	Support plus another community aspect, such as product or connecting with peers	Success community hub, supporting several use cases
Team Involvement	Single team and limited staff involved	Stakeholders from multiple teams involved	Cross-departmental initiative with buy-in from the top
Engagement Strategy	One-to-one engagement, reactive	Moving towards scalable processes	Proactive and has achieved scale, can now support mix of one-to-one and one-to-many interactions
Content Creation	Reactive content from user generated content (UGC)	Mix of reactive content and planned content, moving toward proactive staff content	Includes proactive UGC in addition to problem solving and staff content
Personalization	Limited	Some targeted, persona-based content	Highly targeted content for specific personas
Integrations	Mainly support tools	Support tools and CRM	Support tools, Customer Success Platform, CRM, events, and others
Metrics	Vanity or lagging metrics	Tied to short term goals	Strategic, tied to business outcomes and long term goals