TIMELINE FOR
A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY LAUNCH

PRE-LAUNCH

6+ MONTHS BEFORE LAUNCH

- ✓ Research online communities.
- ✓ Speak to stakeholders and gather feedback on community idea.
- ✓ Create a compelling business case for the community.

3–6 MONTHS BEFORE LAUNCH

- ✓ Research audience and develop member personas.
- ✓ Develop the community strategy.
- ✓ Write the feature specifications and request for proposal.
- ✓ Get budget approval.
- ✓ Ensure a total reachable audience of at least 15k people.
- ✓ Select community platform vendor and implementation partner.

0–1 MONTHS BEFORE LAUNCH

- ✓ Initiate and answer 5 to 10 questions in the community.
- ✓ Invite founding members to join and solicit thoughts and ideas from founding members (and create roles for founding members).
- ✓ Draft the rules in collaboration with members and gain their support.
- ✓ Segment mailing list /audience in two 3 to 4 segments.
- ✓ Finalise platform design and configuration (including all copy).
- ✓ Ensure at least 15 active participants within the community.
- ✓ Draft up all promotional materials to support the growth of the community (newsletter, press releases, social media content, on-site content, social ads, influencers, staff referrals, signatures etc...)

1–3 MONTHS BEFORE LAUNCH

- ✓ Recruit community manager.
- ✓ Develop and customise the community platform.
- ✓ Identify and reach out to 30 to 50 founding members of the community.
- ✓ Engage with stakeholders and align all promotional resources to support the community during launch week.

LAUNCH

- ✓ Send email to the first identified segment of the mailing list.
- ✓ Promote the community through social media.
- ✓ Position the community prominently on the company homepage.
- ✓ Create a welcome message on the community.
- ✓ Include community in staff signatures.
- ✓ Ensure every discussion gets a rapid response.

POST-LAUNCH

0–1 MONTHS AFTER LAUNCH

- ✓ Promote the community to the next segments of the mailing list.
- ✓ Create a private group for founding and most active members.
- ✓ Develop the first big content project and solicit community involvement.
- ✓ Launch community steering committee.
- ✓ Create the measurement framework

1–3 MONTHS AFTER LAUNCH

- ✓ Identify sources of member acquisition and promote in those channels.
- ✓ Add community to the customer onboarding process (if relevant).
- ✓ Undertake a technical SEO audience and optimise the community for search.
- ✓ Design and improve the member journey.
- ✓ Gradually improve and expand the superuser program.
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive member reward scheme.

3+ MONTHS AFTER LAUNCH

ONWARD!

- ✓ Gradually expand the value of the community to the organisation.
- ✓ Gradually expand the value of the community to members.
- ✓ Develop a business case for expanding the community team.
- ✓ Ongoing maintenance, moderation, and improvement of the community.