How to Growth Hack Your Online Community

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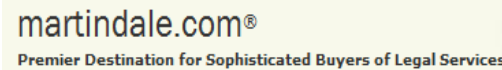CEO, Leader Networks

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About Leader Networks

Leader Networks is a research and consulting firm that helps companies use digital and social technologies to gain competitive advantage. We work alongside our clients to develop digital business strategies, launch new digital products and business models, create and grow online communities, and craft social selling campaigns and operations. Our efforts pay off – by enabling organizations to better engage their customers, drive new product and service innovations, reduce costs, and boost shareholder value.

Our clients include some of the world's best-known companies – from Cisco Systems, Hitachi, Hewlett-Packard, and Royal Dutch Shell to Fidelity, Thomson Reuters, Company, and the World Bank. They also include forward-thinking associations like The Children's Hospitals Network and National Conference of State Legislators.

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And Helped Many Organizations Around The World

**Online community builders...
our day has come!**

4

Knowledge workers have a **burnout rate** that is **40X** higher than most other white collar professions.

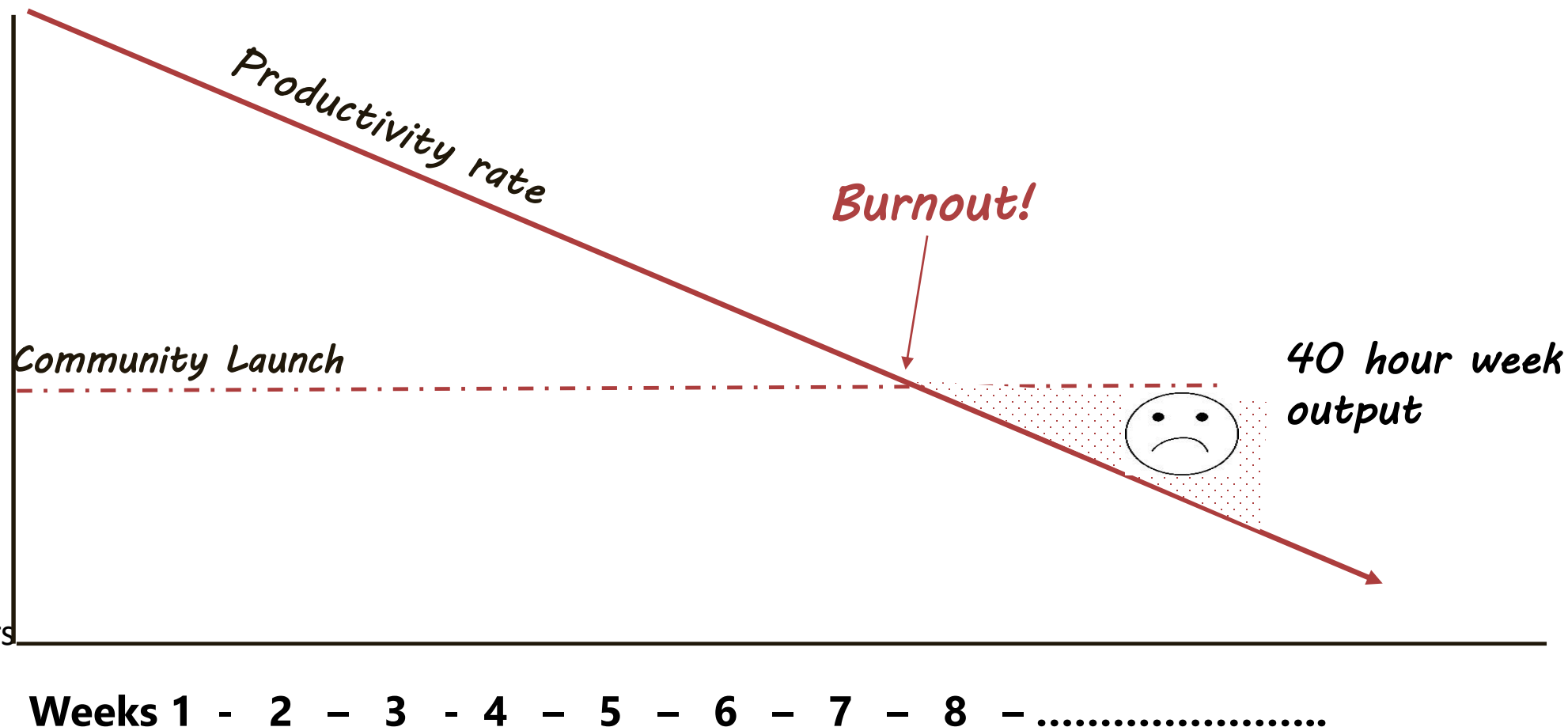# #CMGR Burnout Curve

Requirements

New Features

Marketing

New Content

Tech Support

Start Discussions

Answer Questions

Onboard New Members

Productivity rate

Burnout!

Community Launch

40 hour week output

Weeks 1 - 2 – 3 - 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – ....

WHERE ARE WE HEADING in this talk?

Methods to increase scale & efficiency –get more out of your time

Ways to help members share and solve their puzzles faster

A few brilliant association community case studies

What TRUST building looks like in community

Defining Growth Hack

A "hack" is a shortcut or modification—a way to bypass or rework the standard operation of an object or system.

a) Grow the size & scale
b) Increase vibrancy

Success

- **BIGGER**: Reach more members with association's products and services

- **CHEAPER**: Lower costs of delivery

- **DEEPER**: Access a broader range of experts

- **WIDER:** Increase volunteer opportunities

- **YOUNGER**: Appeal to millennials to increase association membership

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9

Methods To Growth Hack: **Size + Scale**

Growth Matters

- **The doubling factor: predictive 6 month curve.** *Remember to focus on growth every month.*

- **Match your marketing database with your membership database.** *Mind the gap.*

- **Use community to attract new association members.** *Community is powerful asset – use it well in marketing.*

Share the community benefits from prospective members' points of view

- **Camtasia/YouTube tours**

- **Public success stories about how the community helped members solve a problem or achieve a goal**

- **Develop a "spokesmodel" program using influential members**

Go Fishing in the Big Pond

- **Marketing and Community need to row the boat TOGETHER!**

  –**Prepare content and campaigns to help appeal to new association members.**

  –**USE social media to find and approach prospective members with the GIFT of community!!**

Develop Repeatable Processes
For scale & efficiency

Welcome / onboarding kits
Programmatic outreach
Support documents
FAQs

National Society of Black Engineers

The mission of the NSBE is "to increase the number of culturally responsible Black Engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally and positively impact the community."

- Founded in 1975

- 30,000 members world-wide

- Community launched May 2015

Example of Scale & Efficiency

1. **Established a task force** that planned strategy and designed operations. Wrote outreach and facilitation messages for different member segments (e.g. new members, inactive members).

2. **Ensures staff awareness** each moderated for a day during the launch period.

3. **Uses social media** to recruit new NSBE members and retain community members by posting discussion topic highlights.

4. **Event engagement** to recruit beta members, showcase community, and to do live log-ins with event attendees.

5. **Volunteer champions** monitor the community and give their "ok" to seed questions being posted under their names and lead discussions.

6. **Executive involvement** scaled intimacy with NSBE members through 1:many communications.

If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go with others.
(Swahili saying)

Launch community or new features *with a Beta group.*

Community is a TEAM Sport! Staff Right and Engage Your Volunteers

Dedicated Community Manager

| Outreachers | Technical keepers | Interviewers & writers | Content archivers | News scanners |

5 Member Engagement Hacks

1.The Importance of OUTREACH

They will not come, just 'cuz you built it!

Three "gives" to every one "take."

Segment members and engage.
- New members
- Active stars
- Fallen angels
- Silent readers

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2. Help New Members Connect with Each Other & Key Content

Member-Greeters
Showcase new members on site & in newsletters
1 month check-in
Track non-returners

3. The Power of a "Focused Group"

❑ 1 topic

❑ 4 weeks – 1 week per theme

❑ Active and visible participants

❑ Defined outcome (what they will learn) and effort

❑ Facilitate

❑ Use phone, as well as online

❑ Document and share with the whole community!

-- repeat a few times a year
-- find other members to lead future topics

The American Association of Nurse Assessment Coordination (AANAC)

The AANAC is dedicated to supporting long-term care professionals provide quality care for nursing home residents across the nation.

- AANAConnect launched 2 years ago
  - 14,500 members
  - 19 staff
  - Community #1 membership benefit
  - Value = consulting dollars saved
  - Massive impact on renewal rate! (58% to 72%)

AANAC
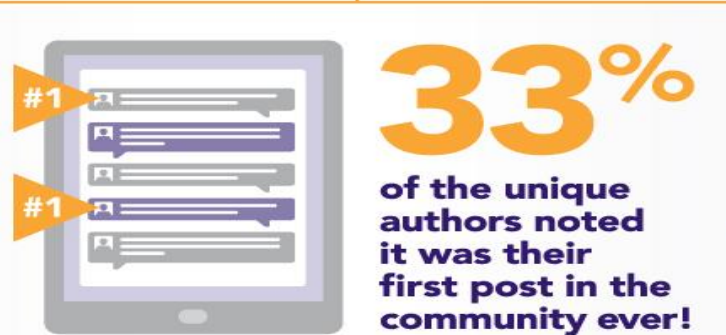
4. Showcase members

Feature them and their accomplishments. They will share the good news and keep you in the public eye.

25

Customer Experience Professionals Association

The Customer Experience Professionals Association is the premier global non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement and cultivation of the Customer Experience profession.

- CXPA & community are 4 years old
- 4,000 members with an annual growth of 1,000 members per year
- 2 staff – largely a volunteer organization
- Very active community & in-person events
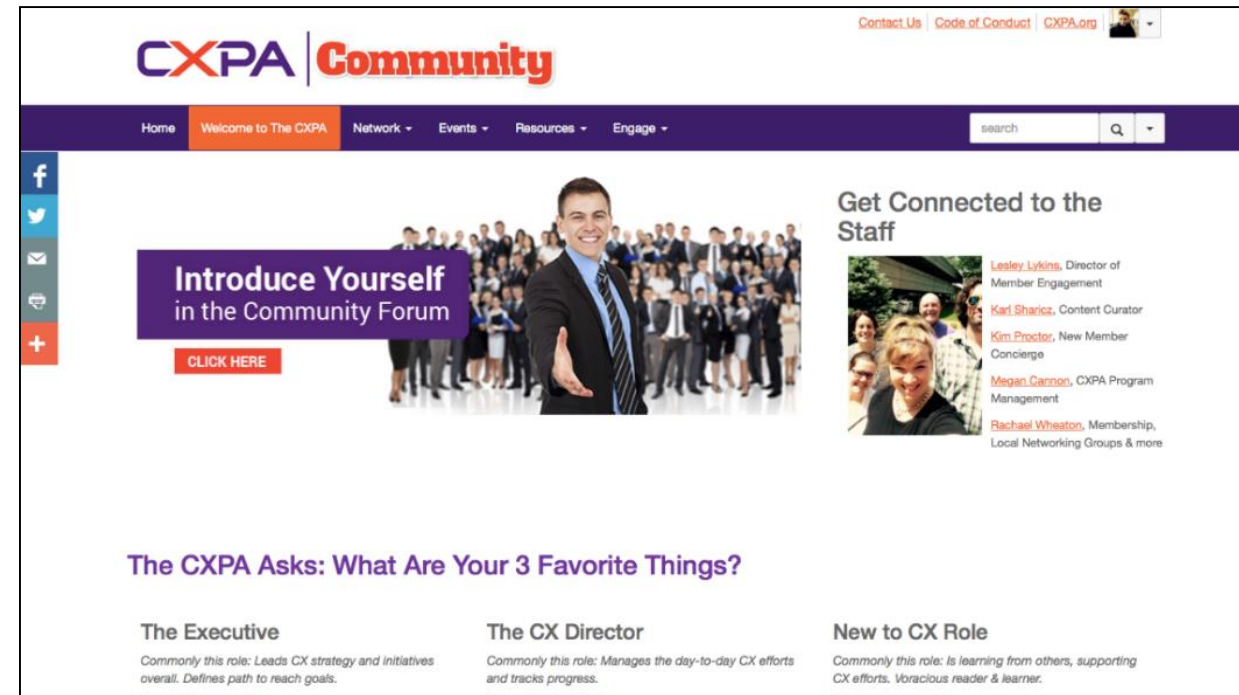
How CXPA Spotlights Its Members

Member-member connection is the main benefit to joining

Recognition and Awards
- Huge volunteer MVP recognition program which includes finding active members and offering them more responsibility
- Special badges and showcase at events
- CXPA cookies sent to their offices

CXPA Expert Panels
- Selected via application process
- Featured site expert
- E-book about their thought leadership featuring them

New Member Tab
- Members encouraged to meet and welcome new members
- 5 "personas" featured to help new members understand how to best use the site based on business needs

5. Make community an important and symbiotic part of your association culture!

New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants

Founded in 1898, the New Jersey Society of Certified Public Accountants (NJCPA) is the largest professional organization serving the needs of Garden State CPAs and aspiring CPAs

- Launched in 2010
- 15,000 community members
- Average 250-400 posts per month
- 80% peer-peer response rate
- Community factors in member retention

NJCPA

HOW THEY MADE COMMUNITY PART OF THE NJCPA CULTURE

➢ Started with a strong in-person foundation of sharing which carried over to online

➢ Nurtures posts and follow-up, helps members get answers

➢ Daily digest of new posts sent to all staff

➢ Uses insights shared online to adapt products, services & POV

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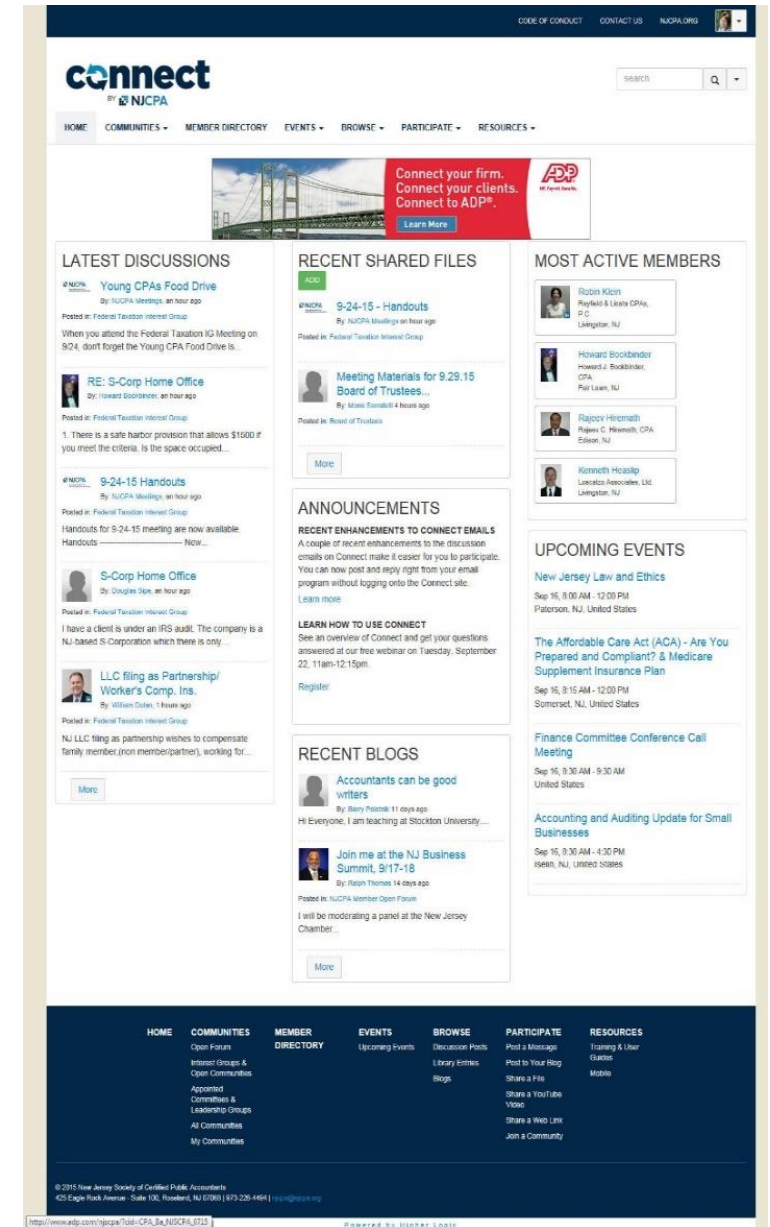
Key Themes To Remember

Connect and empower your community members

Make them everyday heroes

They will contribute if they find value and peer relationships

Help them trust each other and your association

TRUST

Grow Trust By Building Social Capital

About Social Capital

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the **collective value** of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other **["norms of reciprocity"]**.

HARVARD Kennedy School
THE SAGUARO SEMINAR

**TRUST:
You Get What
You Give**

The Community Engagement Model: "Norms of reciprocity"

- Engagement solves problem
- Member indebted to community
- Member makes contribution
- Other members connect to contributor
- Community value increases through information flow
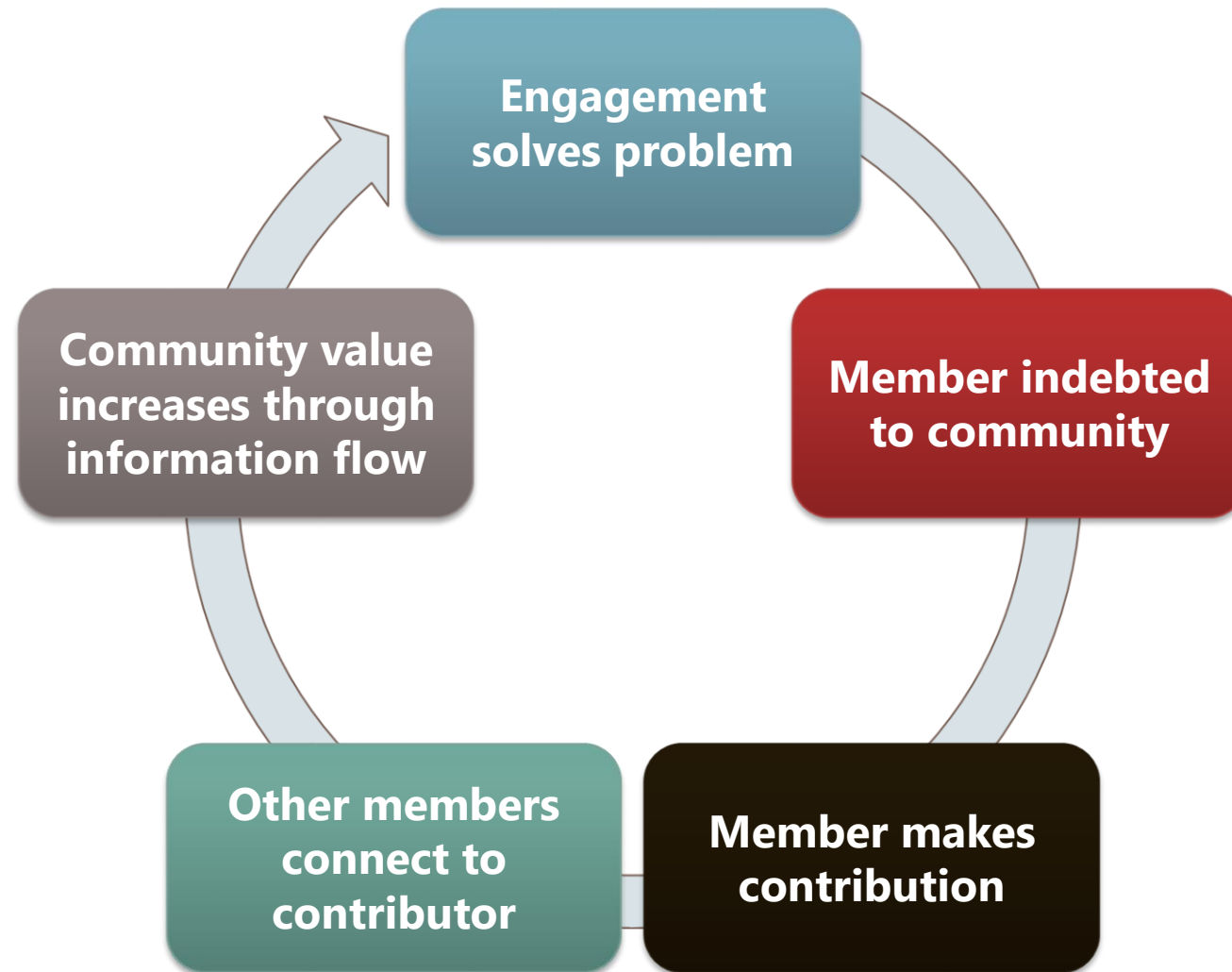
Community Member Engagement Evolution

Being online · **Doing online** · **Acting online** · **Thinking online**

View information | Profile to post a question | Member to member interactions | Sustained engagement and share expertise

Occasional visitor activities:
-Searches for an answer
-Explores the member directory

Frequent visitor activities:
-Asks a question
-Takes a quick poll
-Rates content
-Connects selectively

Gold level activities:
-Connects to many members
-Shares ideas and experiences
-Gives feedback or ideas about community operations

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Types Of Members And How To Activate Them

	FAME SEEKERS	CONNECTORS	PROBLEM SOLVER
Key Characteristic	• Seeks opportunities to grow reputation showcase thought leadership	• Seeks opportunity to be valued. • Connect people with each other and with content	• Reticent participant but overcomes in order to get answers to their questions
Motivators	• Public recognition appreciation	• Off-line and online appreciation • Validation thru forum post	• Timely response & Information • Thought leadership post
Example Rewards	• Member spotlight • Bylined article opportunity • Shout-out in newsletter or in a discussion	• Additional responsibility as content curator or people matcher	• Offline supplemental research or pointers to content or people who may help them

THE SETTLERS OF CATAN

KLAUS TEUBER

- **German game by Klaus Teube in 1995**
- **Based in the spirit of community**
- **Focus on exploration, development and trade**
- **Goal is to create the most successful colony**

In Settlers, the trading and the interconnected fates of the players keeps everyone involved --even when they aren't rolling the dice. There are multiple ways to win.

Award-Winning Game of Discovery, Settlement & Trade

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Hunt for Hand-Raisers
Expand volunteerism and establish ambassador programs

Lower Boundaries

- Balance power to yield higher comfort with knowledge sharing
- Validate authority of up-and-comers for increased transparency

17 39

Marshal the Executives

- Fear, time compression and lack of perceived value can prevent participation

- Counteract with reverse mentoring programs & strategic alignment initiatives

- Help them make tacit knowledge explicit

40

Capture & extend content: value of insights shared increases content relatability

- Conduct group research, analyze vibrant discussions for trends, create topic briefs & share with industry or world!

Community …
members and organizations *working together*
to solve a common puzzle!

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