



# BUILDING & MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITIES



# INTRODUCTION

Social media is going back to its roots and focusing on building authentic communities, rather than a platform for simply blasting out marketing messages. People are becoming blind to hard-sell social advertising and expect authentic, real-time interaction – and that includes with brands.

To establish and maintain a successful community, you need to be focused on delivering real and thoughtful experiences and play the long game to achieve marketing objectives.

This eBook gives you the essential elements for success.



## PRIORITISE RELEVANCE AND AUTHENTICITY

What you're looking for isn't one-off transactions; but genuine and meaningful relationships and communication, to boost the chance of future interactions and possible conversions.

- [43% of millennials](#) rank authenticity over content when consuming news.
- Decide on a tone of voice. For example, you could integrate personality through humour and honesty so that your audience can relate to your brand.
- Focus your time and energy on the right channels. Use your buyer personas to inform this strategy. For example, a punk music label probably wouldn't thrive on LinkedIn. Identify which social platforms are most appropriate for your business, industry and target audience. Don't try to be everywhere at once. [This blog](#) explains how to do this in more detail.
- Post consistently and publish/be active when your followers are.
- Create a positive user experience by ensuring links back to content, whether on your own website or elsewhere, go to the right place.
- Ditch the hard-sell. When you create and share content, make sure it's newsworthy, valuable information. But remember isn't all about pushing out content.
- Show your appreciation for positive comments or to respond to disappointed customers, turning potentially negative experiences into positive ones.

Social media offers you an excellent opportunity to encourage interaction, as in the example below of Sharpie responding to a tweet from a customer – this is the kind of thing that drives loyalty and brand advocacy:



## ENGAGE AND INSPIRE YOUR FOLLOWERS

Communities are built around content that members find useful, reflects how they want to be perceived, and allows them to interact with those whose values and beliefs they feel align with their own.

- Create shareable and memorable content that's [emotionally engaging](#), or that will spark a discussion. [Live streaming](#) is a useful tactic for helping to build up anticipation before the event and generating FOMO (fear of missing out). For more information on optimising your social posts and your sharing strategy in general, download our eBook [Success with social sharing](#).
- Share content that people will want to read and share with their friends and colleagues; that's relevant but different and memorable enough to make you stand out from your competitors.
- Listen carefully. Find out more about customers' needs and expectations. Social media isn't designed for one-way communication. Participate in discussions, start conversations and comment on others' posts.
- Go interactive. With an increasing emphasis on providing users with a personalised experience, [interactive content](#) is high on the agenda of many marketers. Encourage your followers to communicate with you and – importantly – one another: ask questions, ask for feedback, use polls, quizzes, and competitions.
- Keep social media in mind when you're [planning your content strategy](#).
- Respond to messages promptly. If you don't engage with your audience, why would they want to engage with you? Set up alerts so that you can see when people have messaged or posted on your page or in your group.

## CREATE AND USE BRAND ADVOCATES

Rather than constantly focusing on gaining new followers/customers, focus on leveraging your existing ones – the ones that already love your brand. Identify them.

- Showcase [user-generated content](#) (UGC) – like and comment on their posts, and share contributed image and videos. Communication shouldn't be all one-way.
- Create the feel of a personal club and sense of exclusivity
- Use hashtags to make it easy to discover your content. Look at what hashtags influencers in your industry are using; search for trending hashtags, and see if you can relate them back to your industry, or create your own to track specific social media marketing campaigns.
- Make your employees [brand ambassadors](#). Identify those who are passionate about your brand and customers/clients. Post about them, for example, celebrate achievements (including fundraising activity), post behind the scenes/social events (goes back to 'authenticity'). Tag them in. A business' employees have around [ten times more social connections](#) than all their corporate channels combined.
- Give something back. Acknowledge and reward loyal customers and followers. Find and reward them with giveaways or special offers. Continue to keep them engaged as your brand grows, because satisfied customers are one of your greatest marketing resources.

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US meat snack brand Perky Jerky rewards loyal Twitter followers with exclusive discount codes:

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Another example is Taco Bell, which created custom Taco Bell rings and sent them to its influential Twitter followers. The ring set included two rings, one that said "Taco" and the other "Bell." The recipients of the rings happily tweeted and Instagramed pictures of their new rings:

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## UTILISE GROUPS

Most social platforms have created Groups to facilitate the development of communities, whether run by brands or individuals. Here we'll focus on the two best known: Facebook and LinkedIn.

### FACEBOOK

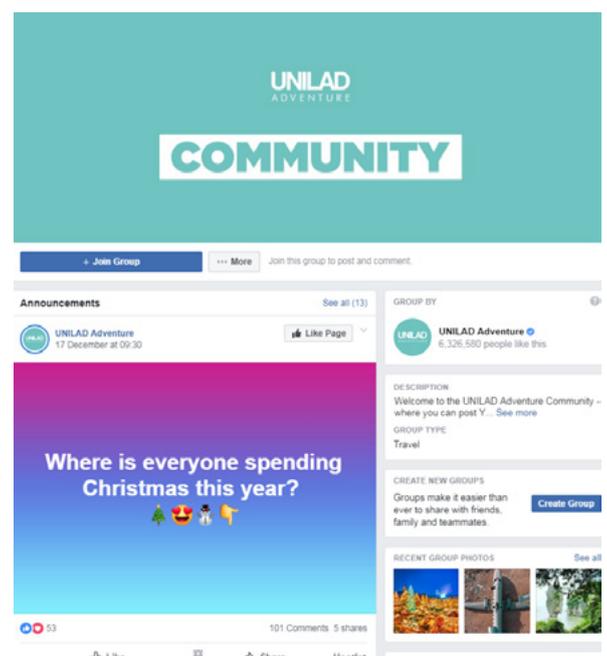
According to [Facebook](#) itself, around 10% of Groups on the platform are communities that “quickly become the most important part of someone’s experience on Facebook”. When you consider that more than a billion users belong to at least one Group, that’s a lot of potential engagement for you to harness.

Setting up a Facebook group allows you to:

- Share posts, photos and related content with other members.
- Notify members about upcoming events.
- Encourage people to share opinions and discuss issues.

You can create multiple groups to cover different aspects of your business or different customer groups, so you don't need to try to make your first group a catch-all. People can find your Group through the Discover tab on their personal profiles.

For example, UNILAD runs a number of Facebook Groups: Sound Community with a music focus, Sport Community for sports fans, Adventure Community which centres on travel, and several others:



## Types of Facebook Groups

There are three types of groups on Facebook, depending on the group's privacy settings:

- **Open:** Anyone can view the Group, its members, and their posts.
- **Closed:** Anyone can view the Group and its members, but only members can see Group posts.
- **Secret:** Only members can see the group or any of its information. People who are not members won't even be able to see that the Group exists (obviously, this option isn't advisable if you want people to be able to find the Group easily).

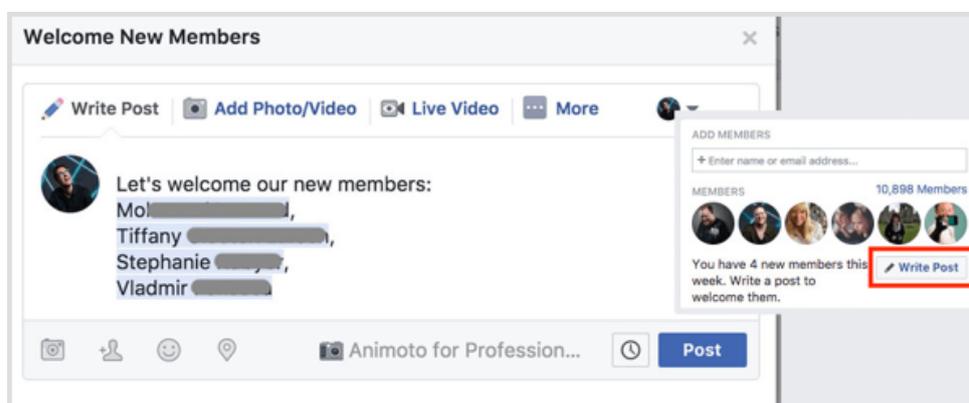
You can set that privacy level when you set up your Group. Also, as a Group admin, you can pick and choose which members don't have to have content approved and can post automatically, which is great if you have trusted members who post a lot, but do not wish for them to be an admin.

## Getting started

A Group with no members isn't very enticing. To get the ball rolling, try inviting colleagues, employees, or friends. You could also reach out to some of the more active participants on your Facebook Page, if you have one, and let them know you're creating a group you'd love them to get involved with. You can customise your invitation with a note to let people know how they can expect to benefit from participating.

You can choose to customise your invitation with a note—this is a good way to let people know why you are inviting them to the group, and how they can expect to benefit from participating. Click the paper icon in the bottom right corner of the invite box to add your note, which will go out to all invitees.

When new members join, you can use a built-in welcome message feature allows you to tag new members automatically, so you can introduce them to the group and let them know you're happy they've joined.



## Branding your Facebook Group

Add personalisation and credibility by:

- **Adding a cover photo:** Choose something that highlights the unique purpose of this specific group, rather than a generic image for your business.
- **Adding a description:** Create a catchy explanation of what the group is all about. Remember that this information is publicly visible for public and closed groups.
- **Adding some tags:** These tags function as keywords that will help your group appear in search.
- **Adding locations:** If your group is tied to a specific geographic area (or several), you can indicate so here. If not, you can choose to mark your group as “global.”

## Grow your Group

Within a Group, you can create and upload documents like text files and spreadsheets – a great resource for organising information and keeping it in one easy-to-find location.

Group documents are also helpful for UGC purposes, such as collaboration on projects and brainstorming, which can help establish your group as a place where ideas can flourish and connections can be made.

To keep an eye on what’s working, Facebook’s Group Insights tool provides information about which posts are most engaging, and what times create the best engagement among members (this is only available to Groups with 250 or more members).



## LINKEDIN

With more than 500 million members, LinkedIn is a B2B platform which allows professional networking and is most often used for marketing and individual career development. LinkedIn Groups provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business contacts, and establish themselves as industry experts.

### **Managing a LinkedIn Group**

You can create your own unique Group for discussion around a topic relevant to your business or industry position and to position yourself, and/or your brand, as a thought leader and take control of content.

You'll be the owner of any group you create, but you can also assign other members to be managers who can help manage your Group.

Many of the same principles already discussed apply to LinkedIn, but here are some tips specific to the platform:

**Complete your group information** - Complete all group information and settings. Confirm that your group name is specific and concise and upload a logo that is clear and relevant.

**Choose your Group's 'discoverability' level** - The main differences between Standard and Unlisted Groups are the discoverability of the group in search results, and the ability of group members to invite their connections to join. Standard Groups can be found by any member. Unlisted Groups aren't searchable by any search engine and only group owners and managers can invite others to join. You must be a LinkedIn member to join either type of LinkedIn group.

**Share responsibilities** - You can elect multiple managers who can help manage membership and facilitate new conversations.

**Include the right members** - Determine the qualification criteria for membership and identify members who can help you jumpstart the group from within. To ensure quality growth, review member profiles prior to approval.

**Recognise the experts** - @ mention members who you know can add value to the conversation and ask them to offer knowledge and insights.

**Use it as a resource** - It's important to ask questions that spark immediate discussion, but don't forget that discussions will live on and can help build a library of useful information.

## Posting within LinkedIn Groups

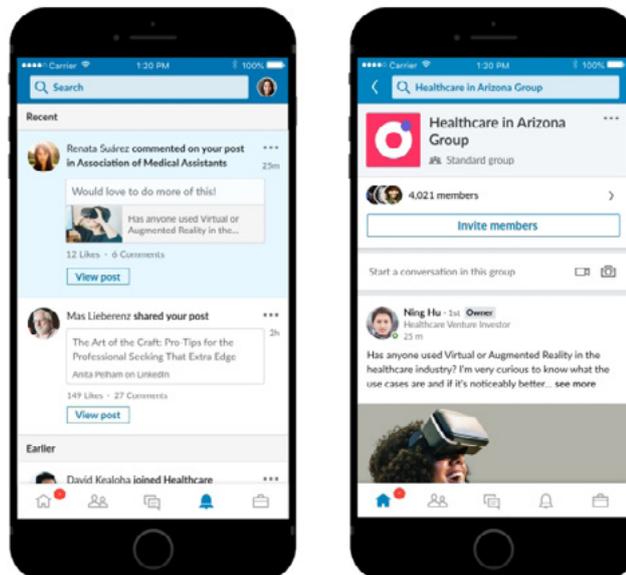
Members and admins can reply to comments, edit posts and comments and post native video to Groups, as well as interact within Group discussions directly in the main LinkedIn feed, ie, without going to the Group page.

Only members of the Group can view, post, or comment on conversations. This activity isn't made public or shown to connections (unless they are also members of your Group). Group members may see each other's posts, likes, and comments within the group, or in their LinkedIn feed.

Group members can also post to your Group directly from their homepage but, again, these updates will only be visible to fellow group members.

LinkedIn sends members an update when someone comments on their post in the Group, or when new people request to join a group you manage.

An example of how the Healthcare in Arizona's Group looks in the mobile app:



## Community management

- As your community grows, you may want to have multiple administrators from within your team, or eventually appoint a dedicated community manager to facilitate the discussions, postings and moderation.
- Moderation – don't be afraid to delete spam or step in to a discussion that is becoming contentious. If spammers keep coming back, you can block or ban them using the platforms admin tools.
- Measurement – community engagement isn't as straightforward to measure as other social activity as it can be difficult to predict user behaviour day-on-day, but you should track stats and the overall patterns for a big picture analysis.

For more information on measuring social media success, you can download this eBook on [proving the value of your social media strategy](#).

## Essential traits for social community managers

For your community to run smoothly, you need some specific characteristics:

- Solid understanding of social networking.
- Patience, empathy and people skills.
- Thorough knowledge of your brand and its offering.
- Ability to multi-task and think quickly.
- Ability to grasp how social media activity aligns with business goals.



## Create relationships with influencers

Influencers come with ready-built, highly targeted communities, allowing you to harness the power of their existing network.

- To build effective [influencer relationships](#) – there must be mutual benefits. You must be able to offer the influencer unique content that will be highly valuable to their audience.
- Identify potential bloggers and influencers to approach to become involved with your brand. Relevance to your target audience and your brand's industry is absolutely vital. You can use various tools to research profiles and refine your search by keywords, demographics and interests, for example - GroupHigh.
- Choose carefully – align their values and focus with your own.
- Micro-influencers may have a smaller audience (500-10,000 followers), but they are typically highly-targeted, loyal and motivated. Micro-influencers garner a click-through rate [3.2 times higher](#) than other influencer types.

For further help on maximising your social presence, download the eBook [Streamlining Your Social Strategy](#).



## CONCLUSION

Many people assume that social media sharing is easy. But you need to dedicate time to building strong communities – cutting and pasting a couple of times a day isn't going to give you the results you want. Build a trusted space for thoughtful conversations and meaningful relationships., and you'll become the go-to brand for future customers.



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## ABOUT US

Click Consult is a multi award-winning digital and search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC). Part of global consumer brand business Ceuta Group, we have a team of 70-plus specialists and a portfolio of more than 60 clients worldwide.

Our complementary services include content marketing, outreach, social media, conversion rate optimisation (CRO) and international/multilingual search marketing. We can also offer training and consultation to support your teams or existing strategy.

Click was named Search Agency of the Year and Digital Agency of the Year 2018, adding to our long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'. We're also a Google Premier Partner, a Bing Select Partner and feature in The Drum Recommends.

## YOUR BESPOKE SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS AND REVIEW

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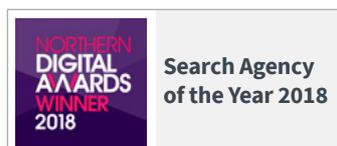
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