

# 10 Elements Your Community Needs To Be Successful And Effective



If you're spending good money for an enterprise-level developer community solution, you'll surely want to optimize the ROI you get from it. Your developer community should provide tremendous value to both you and the users of your product(s). Whether you want to use it as a developer marketing tool, to create advocates, to provide "freemium" advanced support to your users, or to enable developers to download your APIs / SDK, there are several elements that we have discovered are present in every successful community. We suggest you take a big picture view of your community to make sure these 10 fundamental traits are present, as they help to ensure the success and effectiveness of your venture.

## 1. Clearly Define Your Goals

Your developer community objectives are no different from any others your business is trying to hit. Be sure to align your community with the cascading goals of your company's yearly, quarterly, and monthly plans. This allows your community managers to understand what is expected of them and confirms that they're measuring the right metrics to keep them on track.

Defining expectations is a major factor in whether you will or will not have success in your developer community efforts. Linking key metrics to business-level goals enables you to increase executive buy-in and prove a more impressive ROI.

## 2. Create Useful Content

It's important that the content on your developer community is not just useful, but also able to be consumed quickly. This guarantees your audience has a quality experience and will want to keep coming back.

The best way to know if your content is useful is to just ask your community! Page views only tell you so much, but user satisfaction can be gauged by sending out email surveys, and monitoring keywords and top questions asked then refreshing or replacing content as it becomes less popular or goes out of date.

## 3. Monitor And Own The Engagement

Your developer community is essentially an ecosystem that feeds off of engagement. This makes it important to create an environment that encourages people to share what they know, answer questions from others, connect with fellow users, and quickly learn.

Encourage high levels of participation in your community with gamification. Award community members with badges, reputation points, and expert status based on their engagement efforts.

## 4. Be Transparent

Real people are behind every keyboard... and no one likes being kept in the dark. Keep your audience up to date with new feature releases, bug fixes, and community initiatives, and let them know how the community is doing.

The goal with your community is to create a place that will fill your developers with a sense of ownership. When they have that commitment to the community, they're not going to let it go down without a fight. Use email alerts to notify members of new opportunities to engage, or send newsletters highlighting community activity to draw attention to your most active users.

## 5. Moderate Diligently

Effective moderation assures your developer community consists of relevant contributions and highly-engaged users. The key here is having a healthy mix of maintaining order and encouraging your audience to engage with one another to drive organic discussion.

Great moderation starts with a clearly defined set of guidelines, so document the desired tone, purpose, and behavior you want to see in your community, then make that document visible in your 'Terms of Use'.

Last, but not least, you need to appoint a Community Manager. This person will drive and deepen the relationships your members have with your brand (again, create that sense of ownership), and also govern the community to make sure activities align with its purpose.



## 6. A Clear Strategy

There are very few people (if any) in the world who succeed in business without a strategy that is well thought out. The key for a developer community is to match your approach to your corporate objectives, which will help you prove ROI and gain executive buy-in.

Clearly defining a strategy also helps users understand whether yours is the right community for them. You don't want everyone in the world to be a part of your tribe – you only want the people who are providing value, growing and helping you and your organization achieve success.

## 7. Abundant User-Generated Content

For developers, user-generated content is king. When you empower your community members to write articles, post ideas, and help shape the future of the community, they begin to take ownership. Invariably, this makes the quality of your community rise.

## 8. Increasing Engagement Over Time

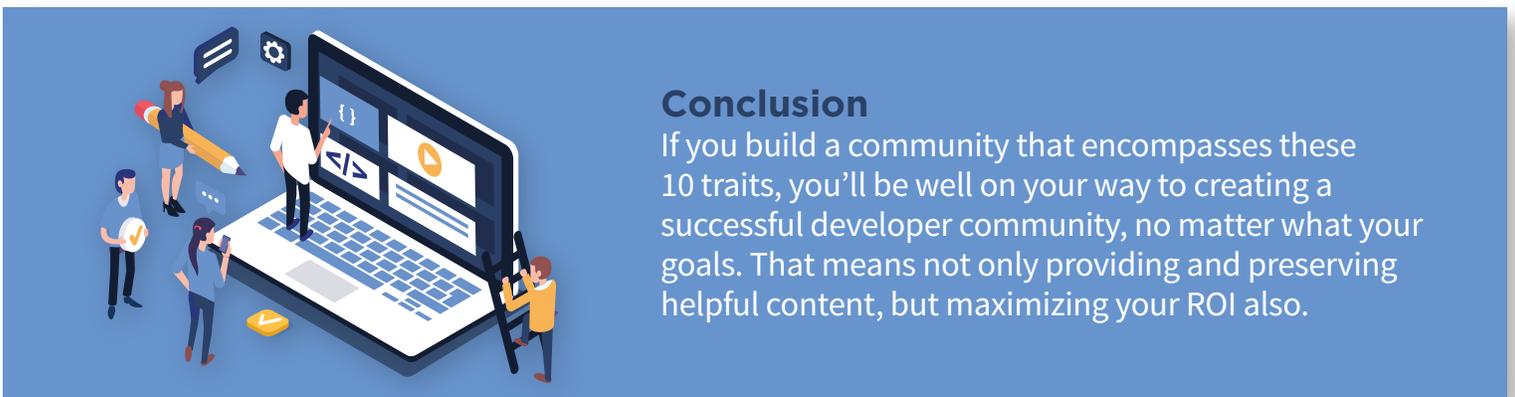
Getting people to sign up for your community is the first step in what could be a long and mutually-beneficial relationship. The job of a Community Manager is to provide a safe place for people to share. Encourage your members to contribute by creating unique rewards, badges, and reputation leaderboards where they can compete based on upvotes or accepted answers.

## 9. Increase Visibility

Your community is essentially an extension of your product(s) which is a representation of your brand online. Ensure you are representing your organization well, and create some buzz to entice your audience to grow, invite others, and eventually they will become advocates for you. The more people who have eyes on your community, the more opportunity there is for you to use it as a tool for marketing awareness.

## 10. Active Moderation

Moderation is more than just removing spam posts and disrespectful comments. Effective moderation, led by a dedicated Community Manager, means that your community consists of engaged users, as well as useful content. The best moderators are the ones who work mostly behind the scenes and allow their audience to engage with one another to drive discussions.



### Conclusion

If you build a community that encompasses these 10 traits, you'll be well on your way to creating a successful developer community, no matter what your goals. That means not only providing and preserving helpful content, but maximizing your ROI also.

