



Zapnito

Guide to Managing Contributors

zapnito

What is a contributor?

- Someone who 'gets it' and / or a 'name'
- Formally recruited, possibly even contracted
- Creates content routinely
- Engages with others' content frequently
- Demonstrates the activity / behaviour that support your network's aims
- Brings about the 'social proof' needed to grow the network in the desired way
- A resource; part of your team

Why you need them

- If you build it, they won't necessarily come
- Most people aren't publishers
- New way to engage with you: need to show how
- Community management best practice
- Sustainable community = 50%+ of the content created freely by others
- Communities should grow organically
- Recruiting active members is the most important first step
- The most cost-effective marketing you can do

What's involved, for you

RECRUITMENT

Lead by example

- Complete your profile
- Create content...
- ...that demands response
- Engage (follow, up vote, share, comment)
- Ask & answer questions

Direct approach

- Fly the flag
- Use your (social) network
- Make it part of your routine
- Incentivise others

MANAGEMENT

Support your contributors

- No content goes unacknowledged
- Incentivise
- Give ideas
- Template as much as you can
- Co-create content
- Check-in often
- Listen and share their feedback
- Involve in network development

Set goals, measure & review

- Align people & content targets
- Popularity & frequency metrics
- Manage churn

Who to recruit

Advocates

- Those who 'get' what you are trying to do
- 'Superusers'
- Willing volunteers

Ambassadors

- Work for or are connected to your company, with a vested interest in success
- Usually paid

Influencers

- Usually highly active on social media
- Who see the value in this type of network
- Comfortable with participation
- Bring an audience

Headline acts

- Low-level participation but a draw for others
- May need to participate on their behalf

Self-promoters

- Bloggers
- Need the exposure the network can offer
- Junior people in your industry are often an easy win (but beware the need for expertise)

Why they do it

Prestige

- Editor's Picks
- Repurpose content elsewhere
 - e.g. on your main website
- Hierarchical contributor structure (in time)
- Real-world events
- Private areas (Rooms)
- Direct access to your company

Profile raising

- Share & circulate content & profile
- Give opportunities for further promotion
 - e.g. speaking slots, if you run events

Networking

- Bring contributors together to co-create
- Make introductions

Knowledge

- Training on new skills (e.g. video)
- Feedback from experts
- Take an interest in their wider work
- Early access to information

Freedom

- Edit conservatively
- Seek & support ideas

Financial

- Discounts
- Cost-covering
- Stipends



What they need

- Invitations & follow-ups
 - From you to them
 - And from them to their network
- Goals and objectives
- Responsibilities and expectations
 - Can provide legal protection
 - NDAs can add prestige!
- Training material
- Participation guidelines
- Style or tone of voice guides
- Content ideas and templates
- Role or task descriptions
- Escalation processes
- Contact details
- Incentives



Idea

Create a welcome pack that contains everything they need

Communicating with contributors

DO

- Encourage open and honest communication
- Listen empathetically and act on feedback when possible
- Build trust and transparency
- Offer positive review and reinforcement
- Let people use their own voice

DON'T

- Ask for too much too soon
- Only communicate when you want something
- Ignore their feedback
- Ignore toxic members
- Bombard them with info
- Make promises you can't keep

Tips

- Personal approaches work best
- Pick up the phone
- Send an early thank you gift