How to Keep Your Mature Community Healthy: FICO Shares Five Key Strategies

Meet Wendy Freitag, Community Manager at FICO

FICO, a global analytics software company best known for providing consumer credit scores, launched their original Jive community in 2013. Looking for a collaboration tool for their 4,000 employees, the organization adopted Jive for its best-in-class capabilities and its integration with Box, which FICO used heavily. The company began with a hosted instance, then quickly moved to the cloud to take advantage of greater integration opportunities.

By the time Wendy Freitag began her position as Community Manager in 2016, FICO's Jive instance was thriving. In fact, high adoption and consistent usage resulted in community sprawl and a system that had outgrown ad hoc management. Wendy faced challenges familiar to more mature communities: how to ensure that content remains findable, manageable, and relevant to their users.

CHALLENGE #1: Wrangling community sprawl

When Wendy took over as Community Manager, the role had been empty for eight months. No governance policies were in place, place owners received little or no training, and users struggled to find answers. "We had over 4,000 places, but no idea which ones were active," Wendy explained, "and we were starting to see the disorganization impacting our users."

Wendy initially tackled their community sprawl in 2018 by running manual audits. As the effort became burdensome, FICO created a custom PHP script to streamline the process. The script catalogued all the places and included fields like the content types, owner, URL, and the last activity date. This allowed Wendy to quickly see which places had no owner or no content. To get more details on the activity in each place, she also ran a query to see how many views each place had in the last six and twelve months.

With this information, Wendy started the process of wrangling the sprawl. Still working manually, she took action based on the data in the reports:

- No views, no content, no owner: archive and delete immediately
- No views in the last twelve months: archive
- No views in the last six months: email owner

Wendy individually sent over 1,000 emails in six months and reduced the number of places and content by 50%.

FICO is a global analytics software company helping organizations in more than 100 countries make better decisions to drive higher levels of growth, profitability and customer satisfaction. Founded in 1956 and based in Silicon Valley, the company is a pioneer in the use of predictive analytics and data science to improve operational decisions.

WENDY FREITAG
Community Manager, FICO

"It made a huge difference, but it was a lot of work," Wendy shared. "I wish I had the Jive Community Optimizer (CO) tool during that project. We started using it recently and it really streamlines the process. With CO, I can create and run several rules and push out automatic emails. It identifies places with no owners as well as places that have been inactive for 30, 60, or 90 days and automatically archives or deletes them. It makes it so easy to stay on top of what's happening in our community and ensure that we keep it cleaned up and organized."

CHALLENGE #2: Ensuring content is findable
A sprawling community makes it difficult for users to find the places and content that they need. At FICO, the Sales Enablement team uses Jive heavily to collaborate and share documents. During her audit, Wendy discovered over 2,400 pieces of content published in 40+ places by two different teams, all intended to support Sales. With so many locations and so much duplicate content, the Sales team understandably didn't know where to look. This was a significant business issue: it was critical for Sales to be able to quickly find the most relevant and current content to share with customers and prospects.

First, Wendy consolidated the 40 places down to six. She worked with the Sales team to understand how they think about the content that lives in Jive, and therefore how they search for it. Based on that feedback, Wendy created index pages that organized content based on product, solution, and industry. Document templates help content librarians create new index pages to build in consistency and ease of use.

Wendy also implemented strict governance around who was able to publish content, where it could be published, and title conventions used for publishing content. She standardized titles to include the type of asset, like executive brief or case study, and added metadata to the description of each file that documents the content owner, the date it was last modified, relevant products and industries, the line of business, language, and more.

These improvements also laid the foundation for improved search. New capabilities within Jive now allow users to search sub-spaces and find the content they need more easily. Wendy's efforts toward better tagging and titles also significantly improved FICO's search results.

CHALLENGE #3: Empowering place owners to manage content effectively
As a one-woman department, Wendy knew that she couldn't keep FICO's community thriving by herself: she needed to train and empower place and content owners. This became exceptionally clear during a review of the company's departmental portals. The hundreds of portal pages were originally created in 2014-2015, and most hadn't been updated since. When the place owners wanted to make a change, they simply created a new place or sub-space, but without thorough training, those new places soon became obsolete as well.

Wendy interviewed the place owners to discover what was working and what was not. "I asked them about their pain points and what they wanted their users to see and do," she described. "I used their answers to create standard templates they can use to make their spaces more user-friendly." The updated templates reinforce image-based navigation, put important content above the fold, and emphasize calls-to-action.

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In the spirit of "teaching them to fish," Wendy also trained place owners how to organize their topics and content. According to Wendy, "I encouraged them to use blogs for communication and news streams to enhance our internal communication strategy. I also taught some owners how to bring in content from around the community and use custom landing pages to lay out and organize their content in specific ways."

Finally, Wendy runs regular training sessions to ensure that place owners stay informed and up-to-date. Her trainings include governance policies, best practices, how-tos for site design and place management, and new features now available in their communities.

5 KEY TAKEAWAYS: How FICO maintains an active and productive community

1. The first step to maintaining a healthy mature community is knowing what you have. Audit your places and content to discover what is still active, then archive and delete as appropriate to trim your community down to relevant places and content.

2. Monitor community health regularly. Wendy runs reports for content, places, activity, and users monthly as well as full audits quarterly.

3. Consider how your users think about and search for content. Build templates that serve up content based on those preferences.

4. Implement rules and governance to establish consistency, keep content creation under control, and facilitate better search results and greater findability.

5. Build close relationships with place owners through consistent communication. Enable self-service with training sites that answer common questions. Maintain regular training with place owners to keep them up to speed on the latest capabilities and best practices.

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