



THEIR CONNECT: COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS SHOWCASE

SEPTEMBER 23, 2019 | BOSTON, MA

SNAPSHOT



5 Trends in Community Solutions Market

5. Divergent needs for internal & external

4. Changes in the community technology landscape

3. Growing concerns over privacy and data

2. Pressing need for better analytics

1. Community maturity is outgrowing technology

5 Trends in Community Solutions

#5 Divergent Paths For Internal and External

Communities are no longer isolated and are much more integrated into the work of the organization – that is great news! But engagement patterns internally and externally are quite different, which requires integration with different communication and content systems and different functional groups.

Community ecosystems are becoming the information map of organizations, helping people navigate to where they need to go.

#4 Changes In The Technology Landscape

There is a massive proliferation of tools and channels – yesterday's gchat is today's Slack. Big vendors like Microsoft and Salesforce are making inroads, while older vendors are merging, changing ownership and leadership, and adapting.

This market activity is creating a lot of churn, prompting a lot of migration, and consuming a lot of attention for community management teams – but also prompting reflection with regard to strategy.

5 Trends in Community Solutions

#3 Growing Concerns Over Privacy And Data

We can thank the Cambridge Analytica scandal for helping educate stakeholders about the value and power of engagement data. This has also exposed concerns over the experience of our customers and employees – and opened a conversation about whether organizations can provide a better experience.

It brings up ethical dilemmas – Information and truth can be manipulated – what responsibility do we have and how does this impact trust?

This is driving the need for more controls over data and how it is used and displayed.

#2 Pressing Need For Better Analytics

We are pretty good at counting. Number of members, number of log-ins. Number of views. Number of threads. That's great – we can tell there's a heartbeat and whether our communities are getting exercise.

But what about our overall health? We struggle to understand in that morass of data, what matters. Are we gaining muscle? We can rarely see how that impacts the cost or value associated with it – or how it happened so we can encourage more of it in the future.

There has been a ton of research in behavioral economics and psychology over the last decade as well as a lot of research into communities and social networks. Most of that has not yet shown up in analytics and dashboards. You could argue that because this is such a big gap, sales, renewals and the very viability of some platform providers have been put at risk.

5 Trends in Community Solutions

#1 Community Maturity Is Outgrowing Technology

15 years ago community technology was pulling individuals and organizations into a new way of communicating, building relationships, and engaging. The technology excited us and showed us how we could unlock this amazing potential.

Fast forward to today – many community teams fight with technology daily to get it to meet their needs. That includes expensive additions and changes. It also includes spending all of their time on the technology instead of with the people that matter. It limits what they can do.

It is incredibly frustrating AND it represents a huge opportunity. We believe this opportunity centers around governance and data, because our clients are looking to build ecosystems of communities that will transform both how they engage with their employees and markets AND their business models.

The Community Roundtable's Community Technology Framework

The Community Roundtable looks towards the future of community management and the tools that will support the work. Community platforms are scored based on how adaptable they are to the needs of external and internal communities. We are still tweaking this model and invite you to provide your own feedback in TheCR Network's Tools and Platforms group.

TheCR's Community Technology Framework



Vendors Share Visions of the Future of Community Solutions

We asked our internal and external community solutions partners to share how they see the future of technology in communities. How do they see their role in this ever-evolving landscape?

Take a look at these vision statements and reflect on what rings true, and what misses the mark.

“

The future for our industry is all about harnessing the value of smaller interactions. As community managers, we want every community member to be deeply engaged for life, but the reality is that very few people have the passion or time to work that way. Communities are going to be increasingly built through millions of small interactions like writing reviews, answering questions, or even upvoting an idea. In addition to (not instead of), focusing time on the few "super-users," we need to leverage technology to enable, analyze, aggregate, and embed the valuable, smaller connections into every interaction.

”

“

As we move into a new era of remote collaboration, multiple screens and point applications, there are big opportunities and challenges for rich media to play a role in bringing us all together in a more collaborative and productive way. Community is based on a feeling of closeness so we need to see a simplification and consolidation of video calling, digital whiteboards, sharing screens, and virtual collaboration in order to better replicate in-person relationships across digital communities. It needs to be instantaneous and cross-platform - totally ubiquitous.

”

“

Communities go back to first principles. Members want their communities to move back to being small, private, and intimate. But most small communities want to grow and get bigger. But once they get big, there's no intimacy. In the future, new communities will strive to remain private and be more selective. Communities that are hyper-local and mix online and offline activities will thrive.

”

““

Leading companies are realizing the true value of communities is deeper than support case deflection and product management; it's in making community a key component of the customer experience. When customers are empowered to collaborate with each other and participate in an active dialogue with the organization, they develop stronger connections and grow into brand loyalists; the organization benefits through a wealth of data and powerful business insights. To achieve this level of customer engagement, platforms will deliver a highly contextual, hyper-personalized experience with the assistance of artificial intelligence, deep learning and automation.

””

““

In the next 3-5 years, Communities, Web Self-Service and Knowledge Management functions will ALL be delivered by a single platform, from a single vendor, to empower customers and the employees that serve them. Intelligent virtual assistants will be integrated into the experiences, to learn from, apply and deliver the most relevant conversational or curated knowledge at the point of need. Humans and machine learning will work together to reinforce the community and service experience.

””

“

The future of community is embedded: in organizational culture, workflows, and technology. Community professionals should be looking to expand their roles and influence by improving business outcomes and embedding “community thinking” in all parts of the intelligent enterprise.

”

“

As the world becomes more digital, people are craving unique community experiences where they can make true connections - either offline or online. Spaces which encourage sharing, reward positive contribution and offer a sense of control over identity/privacy, will thrive. The future challenge will be how to balance member retention - or creating spaces people seek - while being respectful of the data shared, so members can feel safe to share.

”

“

Community is an essential driver of long-term success in any organization; it is built through relationships that are grounded in transparency, dialogue, and trust. When people feel a sense of belonging, it dramatically changes the way they live and work.

”

Continuing the Discussion

TheCR Network is the premier global community for online community, collaboration and knowledge management professionals. Members have exclusive access to the research, resources, tools, and connections they need to build and manage effective community programs.



Get Involved

The valuable discussions happening in TheCR Network around community platforms are made possible by all the community managers who take the initiative to ask questions and share resources. We are committed to continuing this vital discussion in our community and beyond. We want to know what questions you still have and how you'd like to be supported in choosing a platform, migrating, and getting the most out of your current solution. [Join TheCR Network](#) and **contribute your voice.**

Happening Now in TheCR Network

Platform Cohorts

- Aurea/Jive
- Igloo
- Microsoft/Yammer
- Salesforce
- Telligent

Tools

- Platform Comparison Tool
- Requirements Library
- Demos

Discussions

- Process
- Experiences
- Challenges