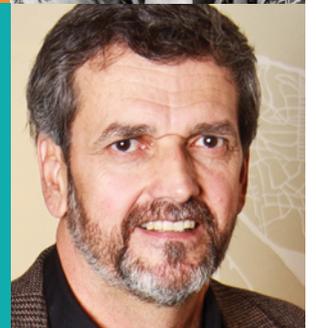


LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW SERIES

# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY



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# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: A LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW SERIES FROM HIGHER LOGIC

## Online communities represent connections among real, valued and like-minded people.

### Introduction & Table of Contents

At Higher Logic, we focus on advancing the concept of community. We build software that serves as the platform supporting the community, essentially the foundation. But it is the community managers that encourage collaboration and foster engagement. We want you to get to know the faces behind the more active and engaged communities in the world. Are you ready for the next conversation in community management? Read with us and go beyond their profiles, for this one-of-a-kind leadership interview series. You'll see what makes these community evangelists tick, what keeps them up at night and what they do when they're not online.



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# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: NTEN



## Higher Logic: Who is NTEN?

**NTEN Team:** NTEN believes that nonprofits will be able to more effectively and efficiently make real change in our communities and the world if they use technology strategically.

**HL: A wonderful goal! Tell us more.**

**NTEN Team:** This means that every staff person in an organization needs to have the tools and the training to do their job well. We are a membership organization supporting nonprofits of all sizes and types, as well as the vendors, consultants, and service providers that work with nonprofits. All NTEN staff engage with the community. The team that is most often out of the office or out on social media includes: NTEN's Community Program Coordinator, Bethany Lister; Membership Director, Megan Keane; and CEO, Amy Sample Ward.

**HL: Describe your first community.**

**Megan Keane:** My first online community, or first in-person community? I come from a very big extended family, so that was a community of sorts! The first online community I took part in was the San Francisco Women on the Web (SFWoW) email

list. I joined over 10 years ago, and the group is still going, although activity is far less as group dynamics have changed, and folks interact in other online spaces as well.

**Bethany Lister:** My first experience with online communities was through "alternative music" chat rooms in the 1990s. I initially learned HTML so I could re-share Smashing Pumpkins pics. A/S/L, anyone?

**Amy Sample Ward:** Many of the early online communities I was part of or created were replicas of offline communities: email list for a soccer team out of season or groups of friends from camp staying connected online. My first experience in seeking out a group online, being strangers united by a common thread, was when I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. I had never heard of it, didn't know what to do and wanted to find others in my situation.

**HL: How many members are in your community?**

**MK:** We have about 50,000 in the overall NTEN community. About 6,000 have created an account on our community.

**HL: How do you define community and community management?**

**MK:** I define community as a group of people that have some sort of shared affinity with one another, whether that is interest(s), geographic location or a

**AMY SAMPLE WARD**

**CEO, NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network**

**MEGAN KEANE**

**Membership Director, NTEN**

**BETHANY LISTER**

**Community Program Coordinator, NTEN**

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

Invest in a time management tool or set of tools. Everyone's system will be a little different, but having a way of managing the flux of information and staying responsive to users is crucial.



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: NTEN

certain cause. I always like the analogy of the party host to describe a community manager. You're there to welcome guests, circulate, get people talking to each other and provide useful information, like where the bathrooms or refreshments are. And yes, sometimes you have to be the bouncer or mediator.

**BL:** I love Megan's comparison of a community manager to a party host. I initially discovered that I wanted to work in community management after regularly hosting networking nights for a small nonprofit. You get to be the life of the party without the spotlight actually being on you!

**HL:** Tell me how you start your workday.

**MK:** I check email to head-off any fires. Then I usually make a to-do list. I'm a big fan of writing things down the old-fashioned way. It helps me get everything out of my head, and then I can plan my day's tasks.

**ASW:** One of the most important community groups for me to check in with first, every day, is the NTEC staff (don't forget that inside your organization you have a community, too!). I skim email for urgent issues, requests for support, or other priority needs from staff. We also have a standing meeting each morning for sharing what's on your plate, where you may need help, or if you're held up on progress.

**HL:** What is one tool you'd recommend to all community managers?

**ASW:** I think all community managers have to be incredibly skilled with inbox management. As a facilitator, connector, supporter, and sometimes coach to your community members and leaders,

you will receive a tremendous amount of messages—in email, private messages in LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, personal messages within any other online community platform you use for your groups and even voicemails. Taking the time to learn and test which tools help save you that time, aggregate messages, and help you track who you need to get back to can save you a few headaches, but can also ultimately help you be the best community manager you can.

**HL:** Where do you go and who do you ask for community management advice?

**MK:** We have a Community Builders Community of Practice (#CommBuild) that holds weekly tweet chats where I get a lot of good suggestions. The Community Manager Roundtable is an excellent resource. I also get a lot of great information from Ben Martin (Online Community Results).

**BL:** The #CommBuild community is a great resource for community management advice—what a welcoming and generous bunch of smarties! I also go to the Tech Club organizer community for help (Elijah van der Giessen with NetSquared is one of my role models!)

**HL:** What skill(s) do you feel a community manager must have?

**MK:** Good communication and writing skills. Community is “messy”—there's no right or wrong way of doing things. You have strategies and policies, but also many grey areas. Community managers have to be intuitive and comfortable with making judgment calls.

**BL:** Communication, listening skills and qualities like appreciation and humility are essential.

“A community manager must be a good communicator and writer. Community is “messy”—there's no right or wrong way of doing things. You have strategies and policies, but also many grey areas. Community managers have to be intuitive and comfortable with making judgment calls. Not everyone is comfortable with this level of ambiguity.”

Megan Keane  
Membership Director  
NTEN



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: NTEN

**HL: Does your organization celebrate Community Manager Appreciation Day?**

**MK:** Not in any formal way, but we're sure to send out some tweets of recognition! Instead, we hold a member appreciation month, and using the hashtag "#ntenthanks," we give out thanks to folks in our community, and community members are able to give thanks to each other (and sometimes us). It turns into quite the love fest!

**BL:** I've experienced NTEN's Member Appreciation Month first hand as a community member (before joining NTEN staff). Megan asked me to speak on an awesome, star-studded community webinar about NTEN's programs. It really lifted me up and made me feel appreciated for my contributions. I try to regularly give shout-outs to our community members, but I cannot wait for the month-long, all-appreciation-all-of-the-time that is Member Appreciation Month!

**HL: If you weren't a community manager, what would you do?**

**MK:** It would have to be something where I get to interact with people on a daily basis. It is the community interaction that gets me energized and excited about my work.

**BL:** Perhaps volunteer wrangling or outreach. I really enjoy being excited with people.

**HL: What are your top five favorite sites, blogs, or communities right now?**

**MK:** Besides ours (wink)? In no particular order: Beth's Blog, Mashable, Nonprofit Tech for Good,

Minds on Design Lab (ModLab), and The Onion (for all these years, it never fails to make me laugh aloud).

**BL:** I love the community I've surrounded myself with on Twitter. As a Tech Club organizer, I appreciate NetSquared's Community Organizers Handbook and look forward to the quarterly organizer calls with other NTEN and NetSquared Tech Club organizers. I enjoy Model View Culture, B\* Media, and Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training, which all do great advocacy work.

**HL: Is your title important to you? If you could change it, what would it be?**

**MK:** A title is a helpful descriptor, but it's not who I am. Although, maybe "Master of the Universe" wouldn't be a bad title.

**BL:** I went fishing for the first time a few years ago. My stepfather took me out. I somehow caught a lot more fish than him and so I made everyone address me as "Master-Fisherwoman Master" for the rest of the summer. It has a nice Roald Dahl feel to it, does it not? Titles aren't important to me—I just want to be happy in my work.

**ASW:** I think the titles that are most important are the ones we give to our community. And this is always difficult, because some words and categories seem a bit overused and cliché, even if we really mean them in earnest! We've tried to use titles like Community Champion, Leader, Organizer and many more. It's important to us that we can find appropriate titles to share with those in the community, to lift them up and ensure they are recognized for all that they do.



**SHOUT OUT:**

There are many reasons to celebrate building an online community for your membership. Write this down—Community Manager Appreciation Day (CMAD) takes place the 4th Monday of January every year. CMAD is a way to recognize and celebrate the efforts of community managers around the world using social media and other tools to improve customer experiences.



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: NTEN

**HL:** Would you share your top tip for growing activity and engagement in your community?

**MK:** Add a little special something to your interactions with your community. Whether that's sharing something funny, sending the unexpected personalized thank you card and swag or just responding in a thoughtful way. That's what makes your community stand out and makes it meaningful and enjoyable to be a part of.

**BL:** Appreciation and authenticity go a long way in stewarding and upgrading interactions.

**ASW:** Practice what you preach. If you, as the community manager, ask people to post a certain kind of message or to post content in a certain channel, but you don't do it yourself, you will lose credibility, trust, and participation.

**HL:** It seems to be a trend that most community managers are young professionals. What is your theory on this age discrepancy?

**MK:** Even though community management is not a new development—it's been around since before the Internet—the job title only recently emerged into the mainstream, and it's evolved as more companies and nonprofits realize the importance of social media in their work. There's an assumption that young people who grew up with the Internet are the only ones that understand the ins and outs of social media. While I don't agree with this generalization, it's great to see younger professionals educating older peers, and vice versa.

**ASW:** I'm not sure it's that simple. I have seen very rare instances of a "community manager" role positioned in an organizational chart at a "senior staff" level. I think the placement within the

organization is a bigger contributor to the average age of people in those positions. I would love to see both sides of this coin change, of course!

**HL:** Are community managers under paid?

**MK:** This varies so much. You can't really make a generalization, as every organization defines the role of community manager differently; some are more of a social media manager and others are more of a digital strategist. Plus these communities vary so much as far as scale and subject matter, so salary numbers are all over the place.

**BL:** This very topic was proposed as a conference session for the Community Leadership Summit I recently attended. (Also a session topic: How to get taken seriously at standup meetings.) Part of the O'Reilly Open Source Convention, the CLS is mostly attended by community managers of open-source software projects. Perhaps in the software world community managers are valued less than developers or other project participants.

**HL:** What does community management look like in the future?

**MK:** I think the same basic principles of good community management will still be the same. Community management guidelines remain as they've been since the early pre-web days. The platforms and tools change, but the same community management tenets apply.

**ASW:** I don't think we can really know what a community management role will look like in two years, let alone 15 or 20 years. The community manager role is not decided or created separately from the community and the reason they are coming together.

**Fill in the blank. Community managers are \_\_\_\_\_.**

**BL:** Listeners, appreciators, connectors.

**MK:** Connectors who are constantly connecting with others, and then connecting others to each other.

**ASW:** Awesome! It takes a unique skill set, incredible patience, and unending energy reserves to be successful as a community manager.



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ASH MATHEW



**Higher Logic: Complete this thought—A community manager must...**

**Ash Mathew:** Listen, guide users and be open-minded to embrace feedback and encourage change (or progression).

**HL: Where did you grow up?**

**AM:** I grew up in Warren, Michigan – the third largest city in the state of Michigan. One of my favorite hometown restaurants at the time was Big Boy—surprisingly Warren now serves as the headquarters of Big Boy Restaurants International. Warren is actually right next to Detroit, only about a 20-minute drive to downtown, so our family would always wake up early on Saturdays and head over to Eastern Market. Another fun fact about Warren: it's where Eminem, one of my favorite rappers, grew up!

**HL: Tell me about your organization and your role.**

**AM:** I joined the Franchise Communications team at Domino's Pizza in January 2012. In my position,

I execute communication plans and programs, as well as develop and maintain our company's intranet. Our team serves as a consistent, active voice of Domino's with internal audiences and stays current on communication technologies and trends. Our team also helps keep Domino's Pizza one step ahead of the latest social media trends, by staying educated on upgrades to existing networks, finding new social networking tools, producing consistent, resonating current messages to reach U.S. store team members and franchisees through various media (mobile, email, online, print, events) and identify key communication messages and appropriate vehicles.

**HL: How did you get started with your organization?**

**AM:** A colleague who worked with me at a digital media company thought I would be a good fit for Domino's. I passed along my resume, got a call and the rest is just the beginning!

**HL: Tell me how you start your workday.**

**AM:** I scan my emails and open browser pages with the following tabs: our intranet site, Google News, Mashable and Twitter. I peruse top headlines and tweets, and then I check out what our users are saying on our intranet's discussion forums. Then it's time to start responding to emails and messages.

**ASH MATHEW**

**Franchise Communication Associate, Domino's**

**Ann Arbor, MI**

**COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:**

You have to listen, and also remember the medium is not the message—it's just the vehicle. In order to connect people with enthusiasm in real time, give people a vehicle to make it easy and accessible, and to help them understand the message and take action.



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ASH MATHEW



**HL: Describe your online community.**

**AM:** Domino's intranet site is dynamic. We have a number of user groups, including folks based in our headquarters, franchisees, and our corporate and store team members. We have a site that is customized to meet the needs of each of these user groups, regardless of the platform they use (desktop, mobile, tablet) to access the information.

**HL: How many members are in your community?**

**AM:** We have approximately 6,000 users.

**HL: How do you define community and community management?**

**AM:** A community is a group of people who come together for a shared interest, whether they are seeking knowledge or gathering and sharing information. Community management means growing and guiding your engaged members within a specific community. The most important element of community management is listening to your audience.

**HL: Where do you go/who do you ask for community management advice?**

**AM:** I reach out to community managers I'm connected to via Twitter and LinkedIn, both former and current managers. It's also helpful to peruse digital publications like Mashable and Ragan.

**HL: Can you share a challenge and how you solved it?**

**AM:** We had many intranets at Domino's, so I worked with my team and our IS team to figure out how we can have one, comprehensive site to meet the needs of all our team members, including corporate team members, franchisees, and stores. And almost a year later that plan has finally come to fruition. We had to map out many things in order to get this site up and running, as we have so many stakeholders who need access to so many pieces of content. But we also have content that can only be seen by certain constituents. The site is very user-friendly with a smooth design, but on the back end, everything is so intricately detailed.

**HL: What would you say has been your biggest success or proudest moment?**

**AM:** In terms of social media, helping to spearhead a social media course for Wayne State University. I am an adjunct instructor for the University and teach communication courses, so when I was approached to help start the social media course, I was super ecstatic. Not only did I get the opportunity to research and compile materials to create a curriculum, but I also got to teach the course.

Ash loves to travel. Two of her favorite destinations are Kerala, India and The Taj Mahal in Agra, India. While visiting, she learned The Taj Mahal takes on different hues at different times of the day—pink in the morning, white in the evening and gold at night, when lit by the moon.

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**"In the future community managers will need to understand that their audience is intrinsic. They will be looking for information, possibly in one location, which matters to them. And ultimately, conversations will happen with our without community managers."**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ANDY STEGGLES



**Higher Logic:** If you weren't busy building engaged communities around the world, what would you be doing?

**Andy Steggles:** I LOVE action stuff. You would find me bungee jumping, hand gliding and paragliding.

**HL:** Tell me about where you grew up.

**AS:** I grew up in Sutton Coldfield, near Birmingham in England, although I spent most of my summers in Newquay, down in Cornwall. Sutton Coldfield is a really great town and is also a mile or two away from the Belfry Hotel where the Rider Cup used to be played.

When I was about 3 years old, I fell into the local river and almost drowned. Members of the community rescued me and managed to resuscitate me. I've never forgotten their random act of kindness or the power behind a caring community.

**HL:** What happened next?

**AS:** I joined The British Royal Navy and served for ten years. I was stationed in Hong Kong for the

final three years. Then I went back to school to study computing in business at Brunel University in London.

**HL:** What job did you have in The British Royal Navy?

**AS:** Technically my job was in Communications (Morse code, flags and that sort of thing) although I had many random jobs during my tenure. For example, one time I was tasked with "breaking" the Queen's standard (flag). No one told me I had to take the flag down at the end. I left the gold braided flag at the top of a mast in the middle of Hyde Park overnight (fortunately it was still there in the morning). Another time, I was tasked with lowering the ensign (flag) as the Royal Navy left Hong Kong Island for the very last time.

**HL:** What was your favorite job in the Navy?

**AS:** My favorite job was being a "Jumper" for almost three years in Hong Kong. I was stationed on HMS Peacock, and our primary job was to try to catch smugglers in the South China Sea. The problem was there's no simple way of stopping an incredibly fast 4 or 5 engine Tai Fei (speed boat). The only way to catch them was to chase them at high speeds, and then try to get close enough to jump from our boat to theirs, crawl over the car (or whatever they were smuggling) to the back of the boat and cut the fuel lines with my knife (hence the name "Jumper").

**ANDY STEGGLES**

President & Chief Customer  
Officer at Higher Logic  
Washington D.C.

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

Consistent content development can be a challenge. Look to your other departments and cross-market. Perhaps your publications department just released the new issue of your publication. Post an article from the magazine in a discussion group and ask your members to weigh in on the issue. In the next issue, ask your publications department to publish snapshots of the discussion thread as a follow up.



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ANDY STEGGLES



The first time I did it, I didn't jump far enough and ended up hanging on the outside of the smugglers' boat, until eventually I couldn't hold on any longer and let go. Definitely the most fun job I've ever had in my life. Absolutely loved it! In hindsight, I guess it did teach me a lesson: look before you leap.

**HL: Any more fun/unique adventure stories to share?**

**AS:** Many. During a stint in the Falkland Islands, my ship stopped at South Georgia Island in the Antarctic Circle. There was a ghost town there—it was just like a scene out of a Scooby Doo cartoon (abandoned and half-sunk whaling ships in the harbor). I went for a hike and found a seal on the beach. I crept up to get a photo, but as I reached forward he opened his eyes and went after me. I've never run so fast. Note: a seal may not have legs, but wow, can they move.

Needless to say, I could tell you stories all day. If any reader bumps into me, be sure to ask about the time I went overboard while visiting a King Penguin Sanctuary, or more about my flashing light (Morse code) issue when heading into Borneo—good stories but not for print, I'm afraid!

**HL: You now travel the world to give keynotes and presentations about social innovation. What is that like?**

**AS:** It's never a dull moment and a lot of fun. I have spoken professionally since 2001 at over 100 events. The focus of my presentations is the importance of collaborative software and the impact technology makes on the community it serves. Subject highlights include: engagement strategies, benchmarking analytics, social innovation, the cloud, mobile, and inbound/content marketing.

**HL: Do you have advice for presenting to large groups?**

**AS:** My advice is to identify a safety blanket. By that I mean everyone has something that gives them a boost of confidence when they need it. Figure out what yours is. There have been times where I've been nervous to present. For me, I hold onto the podium like it's preventing me from drowning or something. Silly, but it works.

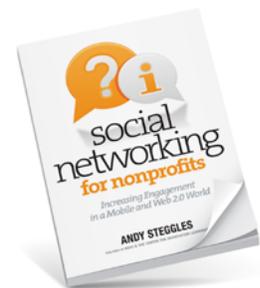
**HL: You have an interesting title—can you tell us more about it?**

**AS:** Although my title is President, my functional everyday role is Chief Customer Officer. I'm the client's constant advocate within the organization. It's my mission to make sure our clients are happy and that our 98% client retention rate continues to grow. It's the best job.

**HL: You're an ASAE best-selling author. How would you describe your first book?**

**AS:** "Social Networking for Nonprofits: Increasing Engagement in a Mobile and Web 2.0 World" was published by The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) in 2010. The book addresses two main audiences: those who might be new to collaborative technologies or the importance of member engagement and those who are quite familiar with the general principles, but want to take it to the next level. Readers can look forward to hearing from several industry experts and learning from real-world case studies. The book covers 1) evolving educational applications for social networking, 2) legal implications, liabilities, and risks of the social web and 3) emerging mobile trends and opportunities.

Andy Steggles in action as a "Jumper" during his tenure in the British Royal Navy. He was part of a long-term operation, which led to the capture of long-time Hong Kong luxury car smugglers.



**Social Networking for Nonprofits: Increasing Engagement in a Mobile and Web 2.0 Worlds**



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ANDY STEGGLES



A true labor of love, I'm happy to see the great success of the book, especially since the proceeds go to charities: Hands Together and The ASAE Foundation.

**HL: Do you have plans for a second book?**

**AS:** I'm looking forward to working on a second book. I've been thinking a lot about the focus and believe there could be some real value to writing a book focused on the success of the more than 15+ million people the Higher Logic platform now serves. I already have a great start on this due to the benchmarking and data analytics initiative we started last year. I really see two books on the horizon. The first will be a revamp of my first book (simply updated with the latest and greatest), and the second will focus on more advanced stuff like the data analytics and workflow processes to automate community management.

**HL: Tell us about Higher Logic's 2014 Community Benchmarking Report.**

**AS:** At Higher Logic, we're in the business of helping our clients build dynamic and active online communities, using our community platform. That's why we teamed up with Marketing General Inc. (MGI) to produce The 2014 Community Benchmarking Report—a first of its kind. My goal with this initiative is to scientifically analyze data from over 15 million users (with help from some awesome data scientists) to find strong correlations and trends between seemingly disparate sets of data.

The other core part of this initiative was to provide a way for organizations to benchmark against each other, and identify where they need to improve and what they're doing really well.

We've been able to take the results and create tailored sets of best practices for organizations of many types and sizes.

**HL: Could you share an embarrassing professional moment and how you handled it?**

**AS:** My most embarrassing professional moment was my first year at The Risk & Insurance Management Society (RIMS). My team and I were attending the Annual Conference in San Francisco, and I was told the Opening Reception theme was the 1960s and 1970s. I went out and rented a full Elvis suit to rock at the party, but I think something was lost in translation. When I turned up, I discovered that out of 5,000 attendees, I was the only one in a costume! The night turned out to be one of the funniest nights I ever had—everyone thought I was part of the entertainment. I spent much of the night explaining how I was the new head of technology for RIMS—thank you very much!

**HL: What is the best advice you could give new community managers?**

**AS:** My best advice would be to listen to people who have done this over and over. But here are three pieces of advice you can take action on now:

- Do not over-segment your membership
- Auto-subscribe where possible versus asking members to opt-in
- Leverage automation to work smarter versus harder

In addition, remember that LinkedIn is both friend and foe. This one is tricky. While technically LinkedIn is a competitor, if used the right way, it can be leveraged as a billboard to send prospects and potential event registrants over to your site.

Mr. & Mrs. Steggles celebrate marriage, family and success at Crantock Church in Cornwall, UK (2012).

**“Believe in the community you support and work toward providing value, but also fun. It's important to showcase your dedication to the community by engaging your members in a way that encourages discussions and provides a platform for open exchange and knowledge sharing.”**



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ANDY STEGGLES



I've written a lot about this, and there are some awesome strategies out there to achieve measurable success.

**HL: Can your community be a source of content?**

**AS:** Absolutely. Your community is a knowledge repository full of conversations, shared resources and ideas. Map out a content game plan every month or every quarter. Think about what's going on in your organization and how the theme of the month or quarter will correlate. Remember that content comes in many mediums which can be re-purposed in multiple formats. For example, consolidate the dialogue from a discussion thread and turn into a blog post or an educational article. Consistent content development can be a challenge. Look to your other departments and cross-market.

**HL: Where do you see the role of the community manager going?**

**AS:** I think it's more a case of how the role of the membership manager has evolved. Community management is the next evolution of membership management. It's essentially the same job, but with many more tasks. The challenge always comes down to resources. For example, if the person responsible for onboarding a new member now has to send out up to three follow-up emails to get the member to complete their profile, and perhaps another three to have them post their introduction message, it can be incredibly time consuming. We've analyzed what many organizations do with the membership/community management role, and much of it can be automated and streamlined. A membership

manager should spend time focusing on improving their KPIs, versus trying to figure out which member they need to chase up and for what reasons.

**HL: You're famous in the association community. Have you ever met a celebrity?**

**AS:** Yes, I met David Beckham at the 2010 ASAE Annual Meeting & Expo in Los Angeles. He was the first English football player to win league titles in four countries—England, Spain, the United States and France. His hard work and passion for his career are admirable. To be the best at what you do, you need to work hard.

**HL: What does community management look like in the future?**

**AS:** Automation. The more mundane tasks of community managers will be almost fully automated. And their role will elevate to be more strategic and analytical. For example, managing gamification elements of the community and reporting on effective community administrators can be mostly automated. And their role will elevate to be more strategic and analytical. For example, the job of onboarding a new member and chasing other members to complete profiles will be fully automated. I'm also incredibly intrigued about what's happening with Oculus Rift (virtual reality headset for 3D gaming). I'm curious how it might impact communities in the future.

▼  
Find more from Andy on all things community at Higher Logic's Blog: [www.higherlogic.com/blogs](http://www.higherlogic.com/blogs)

Andy Steggles & David Beckham

**"The role of a community manager is to get people to communicate, share and react. Effective community managers need to be all about results. Set realistic key performance indicators (KPIs) and hold yourself accountable for them."**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: LINDSAY STARKE



**Higher Logic: Describe your community management style in 3 words.**

**Lindsay Starke:** Intuitive, analytical, human.

**HL: Where did you grow up?**

**LS:** I grew up here in Atlanta, Georgia, but have lived around the country for a while for other jobs and adventures. I came back a few years ago and have been settling in my hometown again. I've lived in Portland, Oregon; Oakland, California; Los Angeles, California; New York City; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

**HL: How did you get started with your organization?**

**LS:** I found the job on LinkedIn. I had been working as a freelance writer and digital media contractor and was tired of the unpredictability. I love being a community manager for PPA and theLoop—it's very rewarding to be able to help small business owners. Most of our members are independent photographers, working weddings or doing portraits. It's nice to know my work benefits people on a very visceral level.

**HL: Have you always been interested in photography?**

**LS:** I think everybody is slightly interested in photography. The motivator for me is that I've had quite a few friends who are photographers, and it's shown me how dicey the industry is these days. You need a good safety net. I realized what I'd be doing would be very helpful to people.

**HL: How long have you been a community manager?**

**LS:** I've had different jobs in communications, social media, and blended in between. I've managed communities just for fun in the past as well. My very first was an online community called the Reed College LiveJournal, for my alma mater. The goal was to try and set up fun activities online that were different. We also kept the community open so that incoming freshmen could join. It was fun, and I actually met a dear friend through the community. He's now head of community on Instagram!

The first community I managed full-time was on a website called Being Human, which focused on cutting-edge psychology, neuroscience, and anthropology. We had some pretty cool blogging features that I would love to integrate into theLoop at some point.

**LINDSAY STARKE**

Online Community Coordinator,  
Professional Photographers  
of America (PPA)

Atlanta, GA

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

There are certain things I've always harped on. For example, when you write a post in your community, you should reference other community members. If you reference another thread then link to that other user's profile page or tag the user. This way it's not just a bunch of people shouting into a void, but an interconnected web of friends and associates.



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: LINDSAY STARKE



**HL: How do you define community and community management?**

**LS:** It's the practice of creating and sustaining a space for a group of people who are like-minded in some way or another. It's like tending a garden; it requires constant care and a love for the practice.

**HL: Engaging new members of a community can be difficult. How do you do that for theLoop?**

**LS:** Every new member receives a personal welcome message from me, which points them to the Quick Start guide and invites them to introduce themselves on our introduction thread.

**HL: What are LoopStars?**

**LS:** LoopStars are our most active members in terms of contributions that week. We also feature a "Member of the Week." People love to be recognized and feel that they are part of the group; this has become a coveted place to see your photo each Friday!

**HL: Do you find content from your community?**

**LS:** We find tons of awesome content in our community! Many times, a great thread gets turned into a blog post. We also use the community as a barometer for which issues are most challenging or interesting to our members at the time. A discussion on drone photography that went to 50+ responses caused our government affairs manager to investigate the legal implications of using unmanned aircraft for commercial photography (as it turns out, it's currently illegal); this allowed us to be ahead of the curve as drones became increasingly more popular among our members.

**HL: Engagement is all the rage—what does a member of your community have to do in order to be considered engaged?**

**LS:** To me, there's a difference between "having engaged" and "being engaged." Members have engaged any time they post a question, comment on a blog post, or share an image they have recently captured. But to *be* engaged is another story—that requires an ongoing emotional commitment to the community. These are the people who call one another "Loopers" (yes, really).

**HL: What engagement metrics do you track and why?**

**LS:** I track new threads, new messages, files shared, blogs posted, unique authors, and unique logins. The first four items measure the amount of content being created by the community and serve to show the amount of value the community brings to our members through collaborative content-sharing. Each new thread or new image for critique offers a chance for continuing education, networking, or personal growth. Unique logins and unique authors show what percentage of the greater member base uses the community each month and what percentage of those users decide to actively participate. Growing either of those percentages is success, to grow both doubly so.

**HL: What is one tool you'd recommend to all community managers?**

**LS:** I maintain a constant, evolving spreadsheet with every stat I can think of, to track changes over time. This way I can really drill down and find which specific actions or features are having an effect, positive or negative, on engagement and activity.

**In Lindsay's Bag:**

"My wallet, iPhone, keys, sunglasses, breath mints, always a Field Notes journal, and whatever book I am reading at the time. Right now it's *The Genius of Dogs*, by canine psychologist Brian Hare, and it's about the unique cognitive abilities of dogs. An awesome read!"



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: LINDSAY STARKE



**HL: Where do you go/who do you ask for community management advice?**

**LS:** I usually go to Feverbee, Richard Millington's blog, or check out his book, *"Buzzing Communities"*. Reaching out to other community management leaders is a good way to validate gut feelings about the decisions I'm making or questions I have.

**HL: What would you say has been your biggest success or proudest moment?**

**LS:** It was really awesome to present at Higher Logic's Users Group, aka The HUG Super Forum, last December. My topic was "The Psychology of Community Management." Or, informally, "How to Make Friends and Influence People on the Internet."

My session covered strategies for growing engagement through understanding psychology. For example, the best way to motivate your members is by appealing to their basic human needs: to feel important, to be part of a group, to feel like they are making an impact on others. You also have to make community visits a habit for your members and make converting from lurker to newcomer as simple as possible.

**HL: Is the study of psychology something you are also interested in?**

**LS:** Before I started working at PPA, I was a head writer, editor, and community manager for a psychology website. I've been reading and learning about the field for about 8 years now, off and on. It's just something I find really interesting. So much of our decision-making is intuitive, but we don't necessarily put it into practice when we're on the job.

**HL: What are your top five favorite sites, blogs, or communities right now?**

**LS:** I love the Feverbee blog. My all-time favorite online community is Metafilter. It's a perfect example of how a site can be a powerful place with a great community feel and good people. I also like Fitocracy—the Rule of the Fit. It's an online community and app focused on exercise and is also gamified, where you can get badges and make connections. I am a Crossfitter and have a standing desk at work, so I like that sort of thing. I also spend way too much time looking at the doggy web cams where my dog goes for daycare. I'm one of those dog people.

**HL: Would you share your top tip for growing activity and engagement in your community?**

**LS:** The biggest thing you can do is to understand interpersonal psychology. Everyone should speak organically and use natural language, like a human being and not a PR robot. Become everyone's friend, rather than a seller.

**HL: What does community management look like in the future?**

**LS:** I really do think it will continue to segment out and become increasingly more specialized, or develop into sites like Reddit (aggregators of sub communities). Community managers will need to become adept at the concept or field in which they work. Everyone will really need to be clued in to subject matters.

I'm a dog person. Meet my dog, Junebug.

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**"I really couldn't do what I've done and had such a successful community if it weren't for our amazing members. As much as I want to brag about myself, it is a group effort. I just want to give a shout out to the people who help make my job successful and really fun!"**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY:

## SARAH ROBINSON



**Higher Logic:** In 140 characters or less, describe your ideal community.

**Sarah Robinson:** My ideal community is engaged, symbiotic, passionate, invested, and the leaders come from within rather than from the corporate space.

**HL:** Where did you grow up?

**SR:** I grew up in a tiny little town in lower Alabama, called Evergreen. The population is only 5,000. It is so small, it doesn't even have a Walmart or a movie theatre!

**HL:** Tell me about your organization, Fierce Loyalty, Inc.

**SR:** I am the CEO and Chief Strategist at Fierce Loyalty. My team (the actual brains behind the operation) includes Andrew McClusky and Nicole Paulus. They are both extraordinary strategists in their own right, and "whiz-bangs" at delivering incredible customer experiences. We see our job as really getting inside our clients' businesses and understanding what they are trying to accomplish. To that end, we provide highly

personalized experiences that keep the stress off the client and deliver more than they expected or even thought possible.

**HL:** How did you get started with your organization?

**SR:** I've been building communities as part of the way I do business since my first job out of college. Because I was looking for the fastest, most effective and most fun way to accomplish whatever it was I wanted to accomplish, building a community around it always seemed like the most natural approach. But I didn't really realize what I had been doing until my friends, Elizabeth Marshal and Janet Goldstein, pointed it out to me and challenged me to build a model for how to create a community. I looked at my work, and I researched every kind of stellar community I could find. After pulling apart all of the building blocks and looking for a commonality, I discovered that while all communities are unique and appear different on the surface, there is a common, underlying structure to the ones that work really, really well. And that's how the Fierce Loyalty model was born.

**HL:** What did you do at your first job out of college?

**SR:** I worked at St. Louis University—Go Billikens! I was charged with turning a suitcase commuter school's residence hall environment into a place with a strong, underlying community. The great

### SARAH ROBINSON

President and CEO,  
Sarah Robinson Co.

Birmingham, AL

Author of: *Fierce Loyalty:  
Unlocking the DNA of Wildly  
Successful Communities*

### COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

To be an effective community manager, you must have these skills:

- Enthusiasm and energy, of course
- Infinite patience
- Keen listening skills
- Ability to let members of the community be the stars



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: SARAH ROBINSON



thing about that was my bosses gave me freedom to try whatever came into my head as a good idea. I quickly learned what worked and, more importantly, what absolutely did not work. It was so much fun to watch students, who initially saw their dorm as just a place to sleep, slowly take ownership and turn it into a working community where they loved living.

**HL: How do you define community and community management?**

**SR:** For me, a community is a highly engaged group of people who come together around common interests. They interact and support each other, and help meet their members' common needs of belonging, recognition and safety. The communities I call Fiercely Loyal, step all of this up a notch and are defined by feelings of pride, trust and passion.

**HL: What is the best advice you could give new community managers?**

**SR:** Ask your members a ton of questions, then hush up and listen. Then listen some more.

**HL: Lurkers – good or bad for a community?**

**SR:** Lurkers are great! I've lurked in some communities for years before becoming vocal and active.

**HL: What are your top five favorite sites, blogs, or communities right now?**

**SR:** I Love the Grey Poupon Society of Good Taste on Facebook. I'm closely watching the dialogue between IKEA and the IKEAHackers community. My Community Manager and the Community

Manager Roundtable are where I go to talk to the smartest community managers around. I'm really interested in internally loyal culture right now, so I'm paying attention to Les McKeown's book, "Do Lead". (Full disclosure: I helped launch that book!)

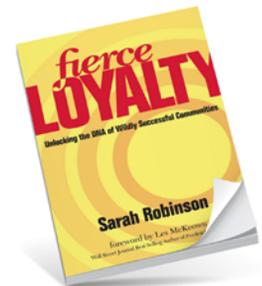
**HL: Talk about "Fierce Loyalty"—the book and the concept.**

**SR:** I love talking about Fierce Loyalty—anyone who knows me will tell you! I've always built communities as part of how I did my job. Mostly because I realized it's far more fun and far more efficient to have a group of people who are as committed to getting something done as I am. A friend of mine pointed out that I'd developed quite an expertise in being able to create truly loyal, committed communities, and I said "Well, doesn't everyone know how to do that?" She replied no, and then challenged me to see if I could build a model for how to make it happen. I built the Fierce Loyalty model using my own work and research from different types of businesses and organizations, who have fantastic communities. And then I wrote a book about it, so that organizations of any size would have the exact blueprint for creating a Fiercely Loyal community of their own.

**HL: What would you say has been your biggest success or proudest moment?**

**SR:** That's easy. At the end of one of my recent keynotes, I was talking about an incredible community my eleven year-old son started building when he was nine. He was in the audience for the first time, and I pointed him out at the end of my presentation. He spontaneously jumped up on stage and took a bow. The crowd went wild and from that point on until the end of the conference, I was simply known as his mom.

Sarah and her eleven-year old son, hanging out before their Ignite presentation at Demand Success 2014, National Harbor, Md.



**Fierce Loyalty: Unlocking the DNA of Wildly Successful Communities**

A practical, put-it-to-work-now guide for understanding, building and fostering a fiercely loyal community of clients, customers and raving fans.



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: SARAH ROBINSON



**HL:** It's great that he's embraced communities at a young age. What's the backstory of his community?

**SR:** We adopted his younger brother from an orphanage in Russia. Thomas decided he wanted us to adopt a little brother for him when he was five years old. He didn't stop insisting on it until we were on the ground with his little brother Nicholas, three years later. He heard us talking about the fact that the orphans there had no summer shoes, so they had to go outside during a heat wave in their winter boots. He decided to raise money and buy summer shoes to send to them. When he was nine, he launched Shoes for My Little Brother's orphanage. Since then he's done it every year and it's expanded to include toys, clothes, and slippers. It started out as a very small effort, but his passion was contagious. People online were supportive and made his project a complete success. They cheered him on, told others about his efforts, talked to one other about the project—it was just an incredible, organic community experience to watch. He has his eye on providing clean water to the orphanage in the future.

**HL:** Where is your favorite place you've traveled?

**SR:** I've been so fortunate to travel to some great places—Budapest, Nevis, Greece. I really loved those. But I think my very favorite place to go in the entire world is Cumberland Island, Georgia. We go there as a family every Thanksgiving.

**HL:** What makes the island in Georgia so special for you and your family?

**SR:** Seventy five percent of the island is a national park. There are no stores, no places to go do anything. Plus cell phones and the internet don't work. So we spend our week outside seeing some pretty amazing things. We go shark's tooth hunting, watch dolphins swim and catch fish, have picnics, and play on miles and miles of unpopulated beaches. We take everything we need with us. If we're missing something, then we have to make do because there's nowhere to go get it. We've been going for eleven years as a family, so we have many "traditions" that the boys look forward to every year, and a rich history of "Do you remember when?" stories.

**HL:** Tell us what it feels like to be listed in Forbes Magazine's Top 25 Most Influential Women Tweeting about Entrepreneurship.

**SR:** Well there's that, and then there's Klout listing me as an expert on coffee! Seriously though, I try not to think about those things too much. Everyone wants to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, so I make an effort to share things that I find useful or that I wish I'd known.

**Favorite Place:**  
Cumberland Island, Georgia

One of the Sea Islands of the southeastern United States, and the largest in terms of continuously exposed land. You might even spy wild mustangs running free—their lineage dates back to the survivors of sunken Spanish galleons over 500 years ago.



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ROY SNELL



## Higher Logic: #1 tip for growing activity in your community?

**Roy Snell:** Market the community like your life depends on it.

**HL:** Elaborate for us?

**RS:** Of course. Have your staff and key volunteers contribute documents, comment and post like their lives depend on it, too. If you install it, they will not come. If you install it, market it and use it, it will take on a life of its own. The world buys software and expects no work to occur after the software is purchased. But that's delusional. The work begins after you buy any piece of software.

**HL:** How did you get started with your organization?

**RS:** It was founded for all the right reasons. I called a compliance officer that one of my employees had met—even though I was one, I had never met one. We talked for two hours, and it was like finding your long lost brother. So we held a meeting in Minneapolis and started the association soon afterwards. We had no clue what we were doing. But the need for our organization and industry was so great. We were successful and eventually we figured out what we were doing. It also helped us to not have a good idea of how an association

should act. We didn't know how to do it, so we didn't do things just because everybody else did them. It was big fun. We started off in health care, and eventually decided to do it for all industries. After 10 years, the SCCE has the biggest following of any compliance organization in the world, I think.

**HL:** Describe your first community.

**RS:** Five or six years ago, we realized that social media was going to be one of the biggest things to ever happen to associations. We found Andy Steggle and had him join us for a day and a half of strategic planning with our entire board. And we went all in on everything.

If you think about it, it's like Higher Logic invented social media for associations. Each one's purpose could be anywhere on the map. But ultimately, the thing all CEOs should say and lead with is that we bring like-minded people together. We used to do it monthly and annually, with magazines and meetings, and now we can do it 24/7/365 from our desks. And anyone who doesn't think this is a big deal is going to be falling behind.

**HL:** How has the community grown?

**RS:** Since we created SCCE Net and HCCA Net [powered by Higher Logic], we've had 39,632 content contributions. And we now have 13,169 unique logins. We are averaging 35 posts a day.

**ROY SNELL**

**CEO, Society for Corporate Compliance and Ethics and Health Care Compliance Associations**

**Minneapolis, MN**

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

The best tip I have for new community managers is to create an open online community. This allows members and non-members to engage with your organization and each other.



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ROY SNELL



**HL: Are compliance organizations ripe for an online community?**

**RS:** They are and they are not. They are starving for information because it's a new profession, but sometimes they are reluctant to participate in online communities because many have seen online and public problems from a legal perspective. We've had all of the same challenges that other professions have with an older average age group, due to the fact that they're sometimes reluctant to discuss things within social media. But as you can see by the numbers in five or six years, they're doing well.

**HL: How many members are in your community?**

**RS:** We have 13,500 members for SCCE and HCCA combined. You don't have to be a member. We did that the day we started, and frankly we were chided for it. Now it appears that others are starting or considering it. The reason we did it is because we were early adopters of content marketing—give, give, ask. Organizations that close their social media sites will be beaten by others opening the exact same sites. You can't win if you keep it closed. Students, professors and ancillary players can access it. Lawyers, consultants and other experts who can't justify joining (the association), can justify helping it. We also got into social networking like no other association. Now we've shifted into second gear: I'm researching more, we've started a new blog, and we hired another employee.

**HL: How unusual is your open community?**

**RS:** Making your private social network public is very unusual for associations. The reason why

most don't is because they consider it a member benefit. They want everything to be exclusively for members and applying that logic to social media communities can, for some, be a fatal flaw. The theory behind content marketing is that you attract people to your organization by providing value, and then you sell them something. Opening your social media is perfect for that philosophy.

**HL: Can you share a challenge and how you solved it?**

**RS:** Our challenge is marketing to people and getting them to join. We solved that in several ways: we sent out a brochure, we created a social media booth at our annual meeting, we emailed members and we promoted it on our website. One day, I decided I wanted 500 new users in seven days. I choose a book that we pay five dollars to print and I announced, "The next 500 people that start a profile will receive a copy of this book for free." We got 500 new users that week. We also took 1,000 documents that we had collected from our website and posted all of them to various groups on SCCE Net. We told people that if they wanted these documents, then they'd be there.

**HL: What are your favorite sites, blogs, or communities right now?**

**RS:** As a CEO of an association, it's beneficial if I show up in as many places as possible, including SCCE Net, LinkedIn, YouTube and Twitter. These are the most common sites I use. My biggest thing right now, and I use kind of a lot of social media to do it, is to start studying the current state of affairs on social media. My favorite content marketing, social media guru is Gary Vaynerchuck. He's got some videos that every CEO of every association should see.

Roy works to build cabins around an uninhabited lake in Canada. The nearest town is 55 miles away, and home to about 800 people.

**"My advice to future CEOs is to stay focused on things that have a high return on investment for your organization. To stay focused and refresh, it's crucial to make time for passion projects."**



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: ROY SNELL



He does swear on occasion, though. (laughs) I've also been going crazy on eBay and Craigslist lately. I use the eBay and LinkedIn mobile apps every day.

**HL: What would you say has been your biggest success or proudest moment?**

**RS:** Let me share a story. I was attending Higher Logic's User Group Conference, The HUG Super Forum. There were probably 350 people in the room. Rob Wenger (Higher Logic CEO) stood up and said to the group, "These two days are all about content marketing, and we're very lucky to have here one of the pioneers of content marketing: Roy Snell." Here's the funny part: until that moment, I had never heard the words "content marketing." I had always done it, by opening up communities, by pushing my "give, give, ask" concept, by selling books and inviting members to conferences. But I sat there at the table with all these other people and I felt shook up, because I was just called the pioneer of something. It was very strange to be called a pioneer and not know what the subject was. I opened up the handouts in front of me (I didn't want to go to a breakout and have someone ask me "How'd you do it?") and luckily the brochure explained what we'd been doing for the subsequent five or six years!

**HL: Would you share your ideas for community management in 2030?**

**RS:** Right now, we connect text-in-text. But in the future, there will be more video communities. People will just pop in and out [of their communities], with their profile pictures showing up on the screen. They will chat with people in a group—it will make it more personal, enjoyable and easier. We'll look back in 2030 or so, and remember what we're doing now as incredibly archaic. So community management will be a lot easier and a lot more interconnected. In 2014 people have to use multiple platforms (Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn) to get essentially the same thing done: communicate with other people. I would imagine that many years from now there will be far fewer players in the field, with far greater capabilities. It's like every other industry when it started: there were a lot of players. And then at some point it weeds out to a handful. The automobile and the micro-computer industries are great examples. Social media, at the moment, is the Wild West. And down the road, it will become a little easier and a little more civilized. I'm looking forward to it.

During time off, you can find Roy halibut fishing in Seward, Alaska. Seward, pronounced "Soo-word," is situated at the head of Resurrection Bay on the Kenai Peninsula.

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**"A big problem is that we have lost all of the generations that lived prior to the rat race. Consequently, generations that have followed are unaware of how stuck and frantic they are. I appreciate technology and social media more than most in the association world; but I think we need to get away from it all every once in a while. The 'disconnect' is as important as the 'connect'."**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: TEAH HOPPER



## Higher Logic: Define community.

**Teah Hopper:** I heard it described this way, and it is my favorite definition/metaphor. A community is a group of people sitting around a campfire, and the community manager is the one that stirs the fire and adds more wood when the fire gets low.

## Higher Logic: Where did you grow up?

**Teah Hopper:** In small town, USA—a little (but awesome) place called Shelbina, located in the northeast part of Missouri. There is one stoplight and a Subway, but also the nicest people you will ever meet. Most of the restaurants that were in Shelbina when I was growing up are gone. My favorite restaurant as a kid was Clapper's. It was famous back then. People would drive from all over the state for a greasy burger, hand-cut fries and homemade dressings from Clapper's. It was small and there was always a line out the door.

## HL: Where is Shelbina in Missouri?

**TH:** Shelbina is just about 30 minutes from Hannibal, Missouri—the home of Mark Twain.

## HL: Where is your favorite place you have traveled?

**TH:** I was fortunate enough to get to spend six weeks in Italy, most of which in southern Italy (Puglia). I dream of it daily: the food, the people, the lifestyle, the wine and the coffee.

## HL: How did you get started with Missouri REALTORS®?

**TH:** They found me on LinkedIn. They were looking for a community manager and someone to take them to the next level digitally. I was a millennial with experience in web, social media and gamification. I am so glad we connected!

## HL: Can you share a challenge and how you solved it?

**TH:** When I first came on board as community manager of THE LANDING, we had a great resource for our members but many were not using it. Our average member is 60 years old, and they were simply afraid of making a mistake. We created a series of educational videos called LANDING Lessons. The first one was a basic "Getting Started" video that showed them how easy it was to login, upload a profile picture, customize their privacy settings, join communities and manage subscriptions. Members loved it because they could pause it and watch it at their own speed. Over the course of 6 months we released a series of video

## TEAH HOPPER

Director of Digital Engagement,  
Missouri Realtors  
Columbia, Missouri

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT TIP:

How about two tips: great content and make it easy. Provide your members with valuable information that makes their life easier, and make it easy for them to find and access.



## THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: TEAH HOPPER



resources that walked them through how to utilize discussion posts and the libraries. These resources continue to serve us well—we include them in new member emails and refer members to them when they have questions about using the community.

**HL: What is one tool you'd recommend to all community managers?**

**TH:** A content/editorial calendar. We created our own in Excel and it is a lifesaver. We use it to organize all information to be shared both within our private community and our public communities. It allows us to brainstorm future content and stay ahead, and also ensure we disseminate information in a timely and strategic manner.

**HL: What is the best advice you could give new community managers?**

**TH:** Understand the purpose of your community, and focus your energy and efforts. There are a million ways to measure the success of a community and a lot to learn as a new community manager. You can quickly become overwhelmed and not know where to start. The work will never end. There are always improvements to be made and new technologies to employ. Find out what your community was created to do, establish goals to get there and don't worry about everything else.

**HL: Tell us something unique about your online community.**

**TH:** By far the most popular feature of our online community is our Legal Line. Members can browse FAQ legal questions and access our attorneys' responses. If members do not find the answer they are looking for, they can call our free legal hotline.

We are getting ready to add a new collection of FAQs to our database. We've also expanded Legal Line with a "Keeping it Legal" video series that provides more in-depth answers and explanations to legal hot topics. While our staff attorneys are not legal counsel for our members, it does give members a starting point.

**HL: How many hours do community managers work? And does that include weekends?**

**TH:** A community manager's work is never complete. As a high achiever, I have had to learn to prioritize and remember that it is a marathon, not a sprint, in order to maintain some work-life balance. Since we live in a fast-paced digital world, and our members tend to be most active on the weekends, no time is off-limits (including the weekends!).

**HL: Engagement is all the rage—what does a member of your community have to do in order to be called engaged?**

**TH:** For us, engagement can look like a lot of things. They may be utilizing Legal Line, watching a video within our community, or posting in our all-member forum. If they are utilizing our community to access, gain or share information, they are engaging.

**HL: What engagement metrics do you track, and why?**

**TH:** We track a variety of analytics and combine what is available from the Higher Logic reports and Google Analytics. Each year we define our goals for our community and then decide which metrics measure success for those goals. We are getting ready to re-launch our community and will again redefine what success looks like.

Teah, her husband and their furbaby Kwella.

**"I don't have a role model per say, but I do have a canine mentor. My dog's name is Kwella (named after the musician Ben Kweller). She is lab, beagle and pit bull mix. I think we can learn so much from dogs about life and how we treat others. My dog is always happy to see me, she is always in a good mood, and she is so forgiving."**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: A LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW SERIES FROM HIGHER LOGIC

## Summary

Every community is different. Is your community open and public, or a private space? Perhaps you've chosen a bit of both. Either way, every community should have a community manager(s) to run it. Just like the communities they serve, community managers differ based on goals, the common interests for which communities exist, and the type of members involved. That is why our leadership interview series offers a variety of faces and communities.

Large or small, open or closed, there are five standout themes to consider for online communities:

- 1. Every organization benefits from an online community. It's a balance of offline and online collaboration to develop cohesion and engagement.**
- 2. Community managers are vital to the success of a community.**
- 3. Listening is the number one priority for community managers on a daily basis.**
- 4. The best thing you can do as a community manager is network with other community managers.**
- 5. Work with your community to create vital rules for engagement. Your community needs to be what the community wants it to be.**

Thank you for reading Higher Logic's eBook! We hope you enjoyed and learned from it, as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Please share it with your team and colleagues.

Our software is designed to empower relationship building and foster community evolution, which we believe are the fundamental elements for relevance. Community is what we do—it's our passion. Contact Higher Logic—we'd love to show you Higher Logic in action.

**866.670.1402**  
**[www.higherlogic.com](http://www.higherlogic.com)**



# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: THINK SHEET

It's crucial you take time to think about how you can become a more effective community manager. Complete the six sections below—share your notes and answers with your team and encourage them to read the eBook as well.

## SECTION 1: FIND YOUR FACE

**You've read about other communities—now spend some time identifying your own role. If someone asked you to describe what you do, what would you say?**

Check the faces interviews that were most relevant to you, and recommend your team read your top picks.



NTEN Team



Ash Mathew



Andy Steggles



Lindsay Starke



Sarah Robinson



Roy Snell



Teah Hopper

Fill in the blank. An effective community manager is: \_\_\_\_\_.

Describe your community management style in three words:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

## SECTION 2: DEFINE THE COMMUNITY

**Keep your team involved. Try this analogy exercise to help. Choose the community analogy that you like and best aligns with your community. Then assign roles from your team based on that analogy. Where people may be missing, think of new roles and volunteers that you can add.**

- ANALOGY 1: A community manager is a party host. You're there to welcome guests, circulate, get people talking to each other and provide useful information. Sometimes you become the bouncer or mediator.
- ANALOGY 2: Managing a community is like tending a garden. It requires constant care and a love for the practice.
- ANALOGY 3: A community is a group of people sitting around a campfire, and the community manager is the one that stirs the fire and adds more wood when the fire gets low.

# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: THINK SHEET

## SECTION 3: COLLECT COMMUNITY TIPS

**Take note of advice. Each interview included various community management tips. Write down your favorites to share.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 4: DEFINE YOUR SKILLS

**Identify skills. A community manager is always expanding and evolving their skill set. Check the action items you'll use or add to your own list:**

- Ask tons of questions and then listen, listen, listen
- Auto-subscribe everyone
- Celebrate Community Manager Appreciation Day
- Create a how-to video series
- Embrace ambiguity for your discussions
- Feature members of the week
- Have appreciation and authenticity in your interactions
- Leverage automation to work smarter versus harder
- Listen to your audience on a daily basis
- Send personal welcome messages
- Track engagement metrics
- Understand interpersonal psychology amongst members
- Work to provide both value and fun
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# THE FACES OF YOUR COMMUNITY: THINK SHEET

## SECTION 5: FOLLOW THE LEADERS

**Network with other community managers. Track down the following community leaders that our Faces recommended—and be sure to like and follow them.**

- Community Builders Community of Practice (#CommBuild)
- Fierce Loyalty
- IKEAHackers Community
- NetSquared/Tech Club Organizer Community
- Feverbee
- Gary Vaynerchuck
- Mashable
- Ragan

## SECTION 6: PLAN YOUR WEEK

**Begin planning and take action. Stimulate conversation in your community this week by starting a new discussion every day. Try prodding volunteer leaders or your most engaged members to get activity started by mapping out daily engagement ideas:**



### MONDAY

Request members share their favorite picture from the weekend. Images are always a good way to grow engagement, plus this will humanize your users and connect them to others with similar interests.



### TUESDAY

Challenge community members to make four new connections by the end of the day. Link them to the directory and track connections via the reporting tool in your community. You can even offer fun prizes.



### WEDNESDAY

Elicit the advice of your community. Ask them to share what the one thing every newcomer must know. Is it the annual meeting, joining the open forum or watching a video series?



### THURSDAY

Pose a question and ask for recommendations. People enjoy being helpful and sharing their knowledge and skills with others.



### FRIDAY

TGIF! Ask members to list and describe their favorite lunch spot. Conversations around personal interests like food always attract attention.



### SATURDAY (TRY A WEEKEND POST)

The weekend rollout—post a top 10 list of the week's most engaged members. Feature their name/organization, picture and a link to their profile with the reason they're active. To make the list, members must be active. It's a nice way to recognize participation.