

Playbook:

# **CRAFTING COMMUNITIES THAT COUNT**

by Dr Ebony Escalona

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# COMMUNITY IS QUEEN

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## Design Thinking: Practical Applications

Online communities have long been a great source of support, connection, camaraderie and insights for many sectors, especially during the latest global pandemic.

In 2020, the Governance Lab interviewed leaders of 50 Facebook groups and 26 global academic and industry experts for this study of the governance and leadership of Facebook groups. A couple of points that jumped out from the report really resonated.

- People can experience a strong sense of community from membership in such groups despite the lack of physical proximity.
- A growing number of people around the world are finding meaning and a sense of belonging in online groups. According to the YouGov survey, in 11 out of 15 countries studied, the largest proportion of respondents reported the most important group to which they belong is a primarily online one. 2

Now is a perfect time to invest in and develop online spaces to support your members, clients, partners and staff.

Here are a heap of top tips to consider from the prep and launch of a community through to insights and community management support.

I hope they help you,  
Ebony

# START WITH WHY



## **FIND THE SWEET SPOT TO MAKE MEMBERS ENGAGE- IS IT PAIN OR PASSION?**

To keep members joining, engaging and learning from one another it is key that you centre your community around a common pain or passion.

E.g. Vets Stay Go Diversify (VSGD) - serves to be a space for those feeling lost or lonely in their career to find direction (pain) AND for those nailing their career to share it (passion). Double whammy!

### **Ask yourself " what keeps you up at night?"**

If it keeps you up at night, you can guarantee there will be others out there that feel the same. This will help you find the niche purpose or golden thread for the group to be anchored on (see later re How to show up).



### Where does your target audience hang out?

It is easy to have sunken bias to platforms that you personally use but where do your ideal audiences hang out online? Where do they go to ask for help? Youtube and TikTok are now being used like Google search engines by many.

# PAIN OR PASSION? WHERE TO HOST?

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## Coaching questions:

Know your aims and how these can be converted into key performance indicators. It is so important to know what success looks like for your community. Remember, these may change as it evolves and as you build in user feedback and leadership within the group. Is it an increase in the use of services and support? Is it an increase in collaboration in your field? Is it an increase in peer-to-peer learning? Something else? If you are not sure about your aims then run some focus groups with your ideal member base and listen to their challenges and desires. Don't be afraid to circle back to this yearly too.

## Key questions to ask

- Why do you want to host this community? How will it support your members?
- How will it support your organisation?
- How could it support potential partners or sponsors?
- What do your members like? What do your members need?
- Who are your key community members?
- What are their demographics?
- Where do they already hang out online?



# **RULES OF PLAY: HAVE CLEAR RULES & BUILD A WORKING GROUP.**

Building and nurturing a sustainable community takes a team so from the start think about the types of people that need to be involved as your community evolves.  
Examples include:

## **1 COMMUNITY STRATEGIST AND LEAD**

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Create the plan and strategy for the community and use insights from community manager to pivot community as necessary

# **BUILDING THE TEAM**

## **A P P R O A C H**

## **2 COMMUNITY MANAGERS -**

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Visible people that role model behaviour, reply to comments and questions, start discussions and pull insights to support the evolution of the community

## **3 CONTENT CREATORS**

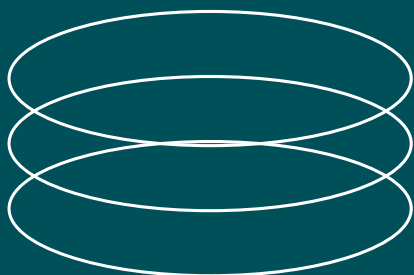
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Create and curate engaging content for the community to feast on

## **4 COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS**

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Community members who advocate on behalf of your cause.



**Start with questions:**

**01.**

## **BE READY AND PREPARED FOR WHEN SH\*T HITS THE FAN ;)**

Escalation policy - as the group norms and storms and finds its feet you may come across a few posts or comments that break the rules or raise important questions for the administration team. Have an escalation policy in place.

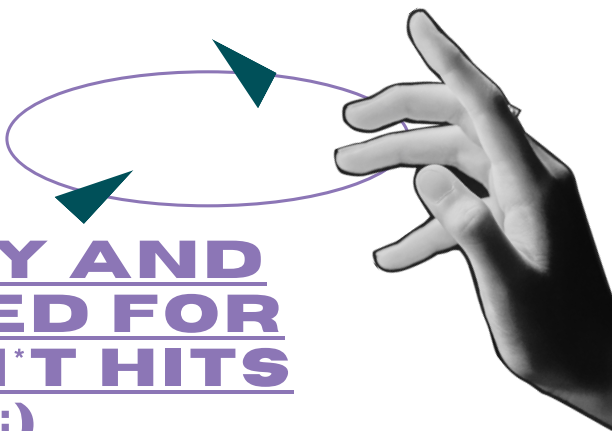
**02.**

### **WHAT IS PART OF YOUR ESCALATION POLICY?**

What copy templates or documentation does the working group need that the team can refer to?

Which administration team members are responsible for communicating to the membership and individuals affected?

What process can you use to debrief when a significant event occurs in your community?



**03.**

### **BEGIN TO BUILD YOUR RULE BOOK**

It is important that it comes from the organization with feed-in from the community as you grow and develop.

When is the administration contactable? What are their office hours and how can they be contacted?

What 5 expectations, dos, and don'ts will help your community thrive?

What specific behaviours can you ensure people demonstrate to make rules a reality?





# **HOW DO YOU SHOW UP?**

# **BE CONSISTENT WITH CONTENT AND CURATION.**

4 content pillars - Now that you know what your aims are you can build your 4 content pillars to support them. These are the 4 themes/topics that you will build your content and conversations around.

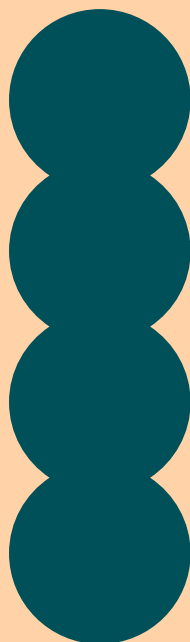


# PILLARS

This helps you keep on track to support your aims and your membership. These pillars may also come from suggestions from your membership too and can be changed as the community evolves. This will help you keep the focus on discussion " noise ".

E.g. for a career development community

1. career transitions
2. career clarity
3. career concerns
4. career options



1

## CONTENT PLAN

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Take the stress out of decision-making for your community and have a monthly content plan where your team have visibility of what's in store, a place to edit and rework copy and a place to file media and links that you may use.

2

## SCHEDULE

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Schedule what you can with your content plan to allow most of your team's time to be spent on role modeling behaviour and being social. This allows you to create healthy time boundaries within the community too

# HOW DO YOU SHOW UP?

## APPROACH

3

## REPURPOSE

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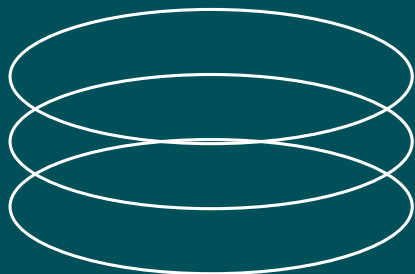
We don't always need to create. Always ask yourself what content can I repurpose or whose other content can I curate (and of course acknowledge)? E.g. Squiggly Careers content used in VSGD

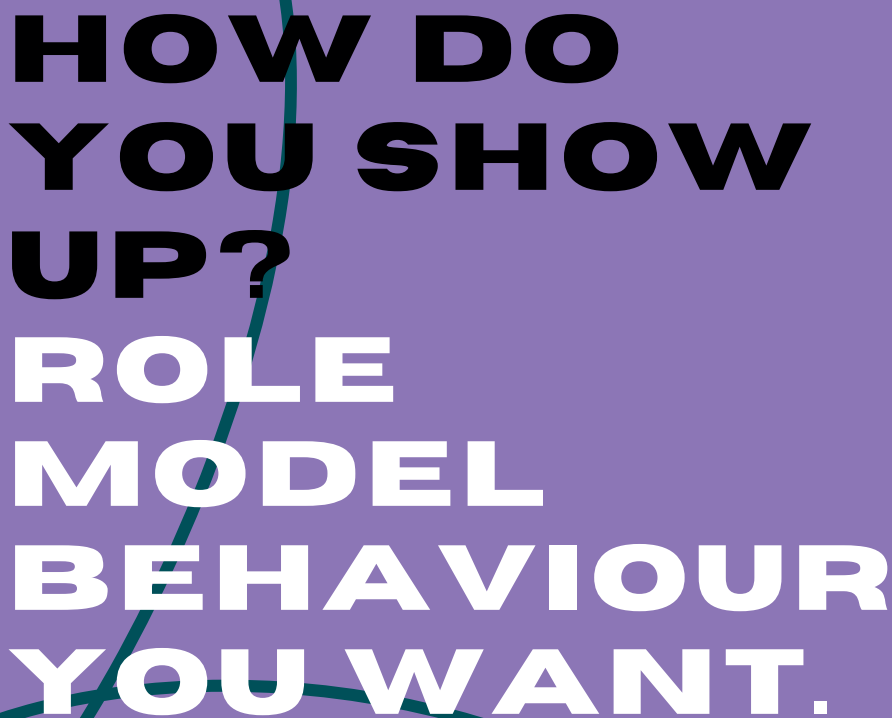
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## ASSETS TO BE KNOWN FOR

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It can be great to start with an anchor asset that people get to know and expect from you - such as monthly community Q and As. VSGD Careers started with Interview the Boss. A form of reversing the job interview process!



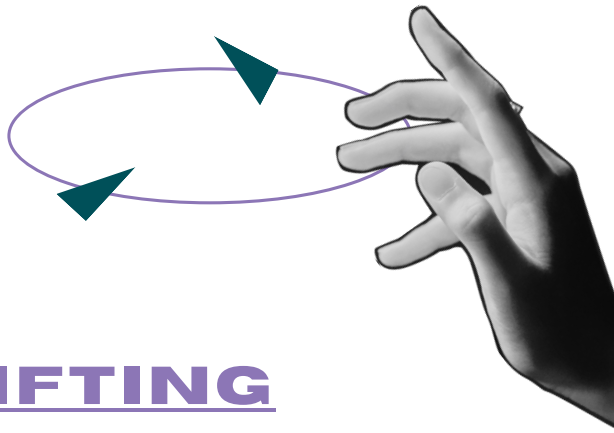


# **HOW DO YOU SHOW UP? ROLE MODEL BEHAVIOUR YOU WANT.**

People do not do what you say, they copy what you do. With this in mind, it is so important that your community team role model the behaviour that you want to see and foster in your community from the start.

There will be “heavy lifting” at the beginning where the working group will need to be attentive and responsive to all posts and discussions. This will ease as your community take over naturally responding in the way you want.

## Role Model



01.

## HEAVY LIFTING

This may look like remarking on and encouraging all posts from the community in the first month. Tagging members into threads that will have valuable insight to share

02.

### FOSTER CURIOSITY OVER JUDGMENT

Online community algorithms, unfortunately, thrive on anger so think about responses you can role model surrounding curiosity

03.

### SHOWCASING VULNERABILITY, FAILURE, LEARNINGS AND AUTHENTICITY -

If you want others to do this, then the community working group will need to showcase this too.

04.

## BE SOCIAL!

(it's called social media for a reason:.) Think about how you can create opportunities for all to share their experiences and insights and for you to respond and encourage.

1

## **WELCOME NOTE -**

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Weekly welcome note to encourage new members to introduce themselves

# **BE SOCIAL!**

## **APPROACH**

2

## **QUESTION OF THE WEEK +/- ANONYMOUS POSTING.**

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If you are seeing common issues arise, take the lead in bringing these issues together for a question of the week. You can also offer an anonymous posting service too

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## **ROLL CALLS**

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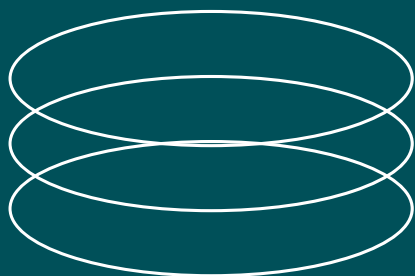
Such as share your top tips if you are involved in [education, research, tech]. This connects community members around a theme and help

4

## **COMMENT OF THE WEEK/WIN OF THE WEEK**

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Pull out a comment from the community - this helps community feel recognised and helps to inspire other community members. It can be easy to focus on the negatives but having a weekly thread where people can share their win of the weeks will help keep people buoyant.



# HAVE A LAUGH

Many online communities have serious and emotive reasons for existing but humans also crave some humour and it can be a great way to build rapport with your members. Think about ways you can encourage people to relax and have a laugh. Here are just a small handful of ways you can do this:

Comedy threads - such as.....

"Your name for the weekend will be the word you are feeling plus the last thing you ate"



# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION IS KEY

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Encourage engagement & let the community create

Depending on your community platform it is important to enable features that encourage engagement and community-generated content. Remember, facts tell and stories sell. Think of ways you can encourage story telling in your community.

- **Member/project profiles** - create an online survey template that members can fill in and you can then convert into content for the group and your website
- **Blogs and vlogs** - ask members to contribute blogs or vlogs that compliment your 4 content community pillars
- **Takeovers** - if you have other social media or digital platforms can you ask selected members to do a takeover for the day - such as on Instagram stories - a day in the life .





# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION IS KEY

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Encourage engagement & let the community create

**Welcome email** - automate a welcome email that helps them make the most of the community

- Short video on the orientation of how to navigate the community or a site map
- Showcase where they can find resources or provide them with quick links
- Share the culture you are trying to adopt
- How and where they can introduce themselves

## **Pinned post**

- If you are using a forum-based community then having a pinned post with a summary of how to make the most of the community can be helpful as if people are lost it is easy to find
- Welcome post to introduce new members - if your community has this function it can be nice to do every week

**Onboarding new community members**

**Regularly update your sign-up process for new members.**

**If you keep having issues in your community how can you ameliorate them in the sign-up process to help set expectations?**

**INSIGHTS  
FOR  
ANSWERS  
USE YOUR  
INSIGHTS!.**



## Use Your Insights

01.

### BACK END ANALYTICS

- When are people most active in the community? This will help you time the release of your content
- What posts or topics have the most engagement? This can help you frame your pillars
- Who is most active in your community? This will help you find community champions

02.

### LISTEN TO THE CONVERSATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

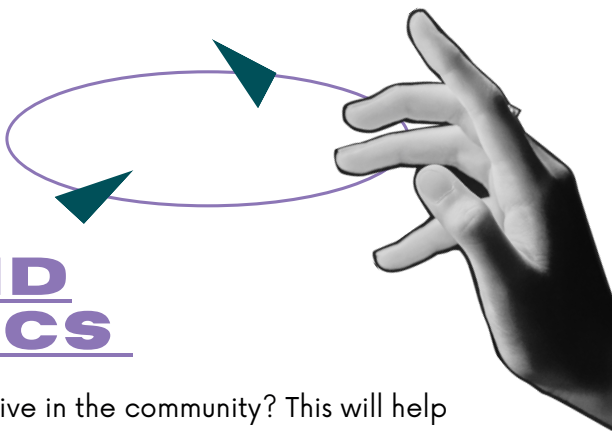
Take a moment daily to review what is being talked about and how it is being talked about

- What is landing?
- Who are your champions?
- Where are there potential risks or challenges?
- Where are there opportunities?

03.

### DON'T FEEL YOU EVER HAVE TO WORK ON ASSUMPTIONS

Ask your community what they think if you feel stuck!



# THINK BEYOND THE COMMUNITY SPACE

## HOW ELSE CAN YOU BE BUILDING LOYALTY WITH YOUR COMMUNITY?



Everyone resonates with different experiences when it comes to a community. Some members will thrive and feel comfortable in an online setting, others will do so in real life (IRL) settings. Here are ways you can build a sense of community in a multitude of ways

- **Email & Newsletters** - email marketing is still the strongest way to get your messages out
- **Website** - how can you support your community to visit and use all of your digital estate? This may also include things like podcasts if you have them
- **IRL opportunities + Offline events** - we crave real connection. In person events also help to build brand loyalty, as well as depth and breadth to your community
- **Mentorship opportunities** - this is a great asset to build into your online community. However, it takes thought and consideration. The Academy of Medical Sciences offers incredibly useful resources on this as well as training.



# LOOK AFTER YOUR WORKING GROUP

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Lead to serve

This can not be underestimated. If you look after your working group they will look after your community.

When we care about a topic or community group it can be hard to “observe and not absorb”.

- **Onboarding and guides/templates and FAQs** - a resource space that allows working group members to be informed and troubleshoot to minimise overwhelm
- **Private space to talk** - so that admins can discuss together anything that might be concerning them about the community or a member. We use whatsapp
- **Divide and conquer** - clear roles and responsibilities. Rotas - to ensure people can switch off
- **Meetings and check-ins** - frequently to thank one another and get creative about ways to make the community stronger and more inclusive

## 1 THE FREEMIUM CONTENT

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What people come to your community for that creates the trust and funnel for your services

# SO WHAT?

## YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

## 2 THE UPSELL

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Your main service or product. This has the greatest value/investment for your members. Such as one-to-one coaching

## 3 THE SIEDELL

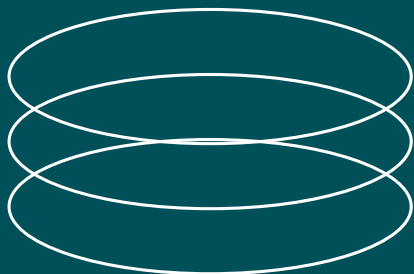
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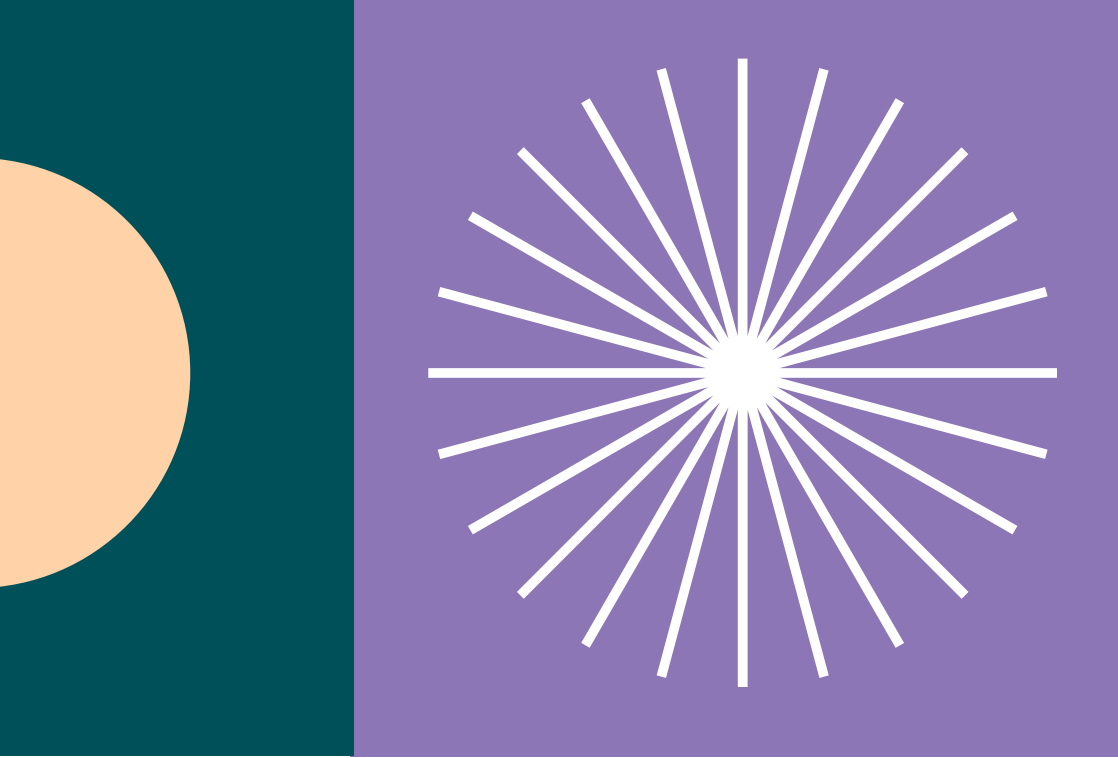
Your adjunct or next tier down product such as group coaching or a mentorship programme

## 4 THE DOWNSELL

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Helps to build passive income products such as self-paced courses





Decide what action from this book you will take  
and let me know!

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[LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Email](#)

ebony@shiftcollective.co

Dr Ebony Escalona

Bsc (Hons) BVSc MRCVS PhD AHE

