

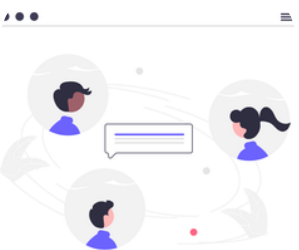
Community & Crowd Transcription



When Wikipedia, whose MTP is to “compile the sum of all knowledge”, was founded in 2001, it seemed ridiculous that people would voluntarily spend their time building up a free resource site. Wikipedia is written by volunteer editors (crowdsourcing) who generate content with editorial oversight, provided by other volunteer editors in the form of self-enforced policies and guidelines. Though some have written about the shortfalls of such a system, the overall value that it creates is undeniable. Here’s one you may not have heard of.



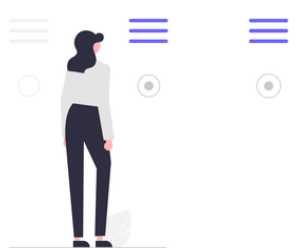
Be My Eyes, created by Hans Jorgen Wiberg in 2015, pairs volunteers with blind or visually impaired people in need of help with small, everyday tasks. These can range from reading an expiration date on a product in the supermarket to describing the color of a shirt. Incredibly, the number of volunteers signed up, which are in the millions, far outnumber the 140,000 blind or low-vision people using it. This enables them to have a really fast response time.



At first glance, Be My Eyes is a chance for anyone to help the blind or visually disabled people, but perhaps a better description for this experience is charitable reciprocation. As Erum Salam writes in the Guardian, “I helped a man make a midnight snack, but he helped me by allowing me to feel useful. I look forward to sharing the eyes I once took for granted, with others in the near future.”



Another company everyone has heard of is of course Lego. Lego’s MTP “inspire and develop the builders of tomorrow” facilitates the creation of designs by enthusiasts who then submit them on Lego’s Ideas Site. Then other Lego fans vote for their favorite creations. Models with the most votes can move to production, and the creator receives a royalty on net revenue for that product.



What about Quora? Quora was founded in 2009 by Adam D’Angelo, former CTO of Facebook, and Charlie Cheever, a former Facebook employee. Quora is a question and answer platform that gives people the facility to ask questions and seek answers from real people, whether publicly or anonymously.



They can also collaborate on Quora by simply editing the questions, and/or suggesting the edits to the answers on the platform that have been posted by other users. The success of Quora can be attributed to a strong and educated user community, an appealing user interface, and advanced processes that highlight the best responses that directly benefit the user community.



Most open source projects such as Linux, Spybot and Avast are examples of enthusiastic communities that offer their services freely for the creation and improvement of software. Another example is the decentralized “bank”, a vision of a secure, transparent currency system minus the central authority of a bank - I am of course describing cryptocurrency systems like Bitcoin that crowd-source all processing required to generate a financial ledger and the associated cryptography. Still perhaps in the deceptive or disappointing phase of the exponential curve, it is highly likely that cryptocurrencies and blockchain will play a predominant role in our future.



Throughout human history, communities started off as geographically based (tribes), became ideological (e.g., religions) and then transitioned into civic administrations (monarchies and nation-states). Today, however, the Internet is producing interest-based communities that share intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs and other characteristics, none of which depend on physical proximity.



For an organization or enterprise, its “community” is made up of core team members, any staff-on-demand employees, partners, vendors, customers, users and fans. The “crowd” can be thought of as everyone outside those core layers.



It is important to note that when an Exponential Organization interacts with its community, it is more than a transaction or tapping into an asset. True community occurs when peer-to-peer engagement occurs. However, this doesn't mean that communities do not need to be led or managed.



As Chris Anderson, founder of DIY Drones states: “At the top of every one of these communities is a benevolent dictator.” You need strong leadership to manage the community, because although there are no employees, people still have responsibilities and need to be held accountable for their performances.

While different communities may adopt different leadership styles and systems, it is clear that to manage a growing community, you need a working combination of direction and autonomy, guidelines and freedom and top-down coordination as well as bottom-up initiative.



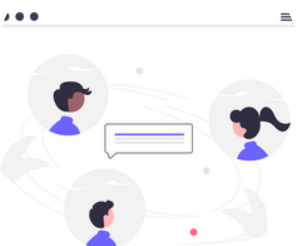
Typically, there are three steps to building a community around an exponential organization: Use the MTP to attract and engage early members. The MTP serves as a gravitational force that attracts constituents into its orbit. Tesla, Burning Man, TED and GitHub are good examples of communities whose members share common passions;



Nurture the community. Elements of nurturing include listening and giving back. "Unlike digital marketing, where ROI is sustained almost as soon as spending happens, communities are a long-term investment that is significantly more strategic" says social business thought leader Dion Hinchcliffe.



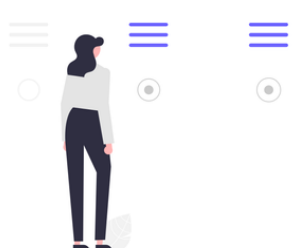
An extreme might be brand tattoos - logos of the most recognizable companies of the world tattooed on a body. Harley-Davidson, Nike, Coca-Cola, VW, and Apple logos have been, for a long time, carved into the skins of clients around the world.



But why do these raving fans sign their bodies with an organization's logo? Indeed, such radical demonstrations of brand faithfulness are often a riddle to the organizations themselves. Whatever the reasons are, when people are so passionate about your brand that they will mark their skin forever, it's a great opportunity to draw them in and find out what makes them tick. These extreme clients frequently comprehend your business on a more profound, more important level than anyone else and building a close relationship with them can serve as a foundation of an engaged and passionate community.



The crowd sits outside the community consisting of people who are potentially interested in what you offer but have not been engaged yet. They are harder to reach than people already within your community but if you succeed, you are often compensated by a rapid growth of your community and outside influence as the number of people in the 'crowd' category far outnumbers the community. It's a vast sea of opportunity that makes it so compelling to pursue.



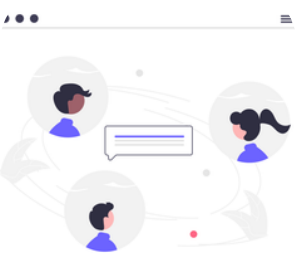
While similar, there is a difference between staff on demand and a community. Whilst staff on demand are hired and contracted for a specific task, coordinated usually through a platform and their work is managed until completion and then evaluated, communities on the other hand are pull-based. You communicate your MTP, promote who you are and what you do, and open the floodgates to let people find you.





Exponential Organizations can leverage communities and crowds by accessing their creativity, innovation, validation and even funding:

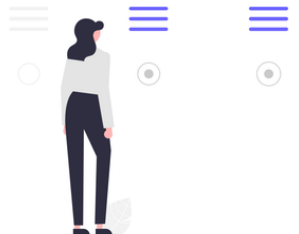
- Creativity, innovation and the overall process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas can be accomplished through the use of tools and platforms such as IdeaScale, BrightIdea and Crowdtap.
- Validation is achieved by obtaining measurable evidence that an experiment, product or service succeeds in meeting predetermined specifications, helping you quickly find out whether what you are offering will fly in the market or not.
- Crowdfunding helps fund ideas using the web to assemble large numbers of comparatively small investors - thus not only raising capital, but also reflecting the interest of the market. In 2018, the global crowdfunding market was valued at 10.2 billion USD and was forecast to almost triple by 2025 to 28.8 billion USD.



When you look at the list of the most successfully completed Kickstarter projects, it's interesting to see one company occupy 3 of the top 15 places - 1st, 3rd and 7th place. Pebble created an incredible community around its products and when they reached out to the crowd, the crowd responded by helping Pebble raise 43,39 million USD. It is no longer active.



Already, exponential organizations are leveraging community and crowd for many functions traditionally handled inside an enterprise, including idea generation, funding, design, distribution, marketing and sales. This shift is powerful and taps into what university professor and social media guru Clay Shirky calls cognitive surplus. Their external focus is such that their communities of hundreds and thousands, along with crowds of millions, become extensions of the companies themselves.



As a result of both Staff on Demand and Community & Crowd, the core full time employees of an organization become smaller and its flexible workforce larger. As a result, organizations are not only much more agile, they are also better at learning and unlearning due to the diversity and volume of a flexible workforce. Ideas are also able to circulate much faster.



In order to create an engaged community, it is fundamental to have your massive transformative purpose well defined so that people can get behind your organization and behind you, as an authentic and transparent leader. Additionally, it is important to have an adequate Interface for your community to be able to interact with your organization and with each other and effective Engagement strategies for the potential of the community to be realized. As Margaret Mead once said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead