

SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

In this document, we walk you through important steps to help you to create a vibrant and effective community. There are 10 basic areas we cover in this document - we have tried to make this broad to cover all kinds of communities.

1. Getting Started: Identify a local or industry interest or theme
2. Identify the target audience and their needs
3. Define the Community's purpose and values
4. Create a dedicated space
5. Create content
6. Promote the Community
7. Engage the Community
8. Organise Events
9. Show appreciation
10. Monitor & Gather Feedback



Getting Started: Identify local or industry interests or themes

- Choose a topic that resonates with your target audience and aligns with your business values (e.g., local sports, sustainability, growth or family activities)
- Find like-minded businesses or organizations. Research other local businesses or organizations that share your interest or theme and might be interested in collaborating/joining
- Start small and local
- Organize a small event or gathering around the chosen theme (e.g., a workshop, discussion, or sports meetup) - this is a great way for a local small business community to launch.
- Consider partnering with like-minded businesses or organizations to co-host the event, providing mutual benefits.

Identify target audience and their needs

Now that you have identified the theme or interest for your community, it's time to look deeper.

- Conduct market research to understand your target audience's demographics, interests, and pain points
- Tailor community offerings and content to address their specific needs and preferences

Define purpose and values

- Determine the primary goals of your community (e.g., support, networking, learning) Identify the core values that will guide community interactions and behavior. It is important to have clear guidelines to set expectations from the beginning.
- Identify moderators and admins for launch (later you can choose community members to assist as you grow)

Create a dedicated space for the community

- Choose appropriate platforms/channels -where does your target audience prefer to hang out? Are they open to trying different platforms (not everyone wants to hang on Facebook, but for local area communities this may be the most appropriate)
- It's important to ensure that community members feel safe and valued to connect, share information, and discuss and interact.

Create Content

Before you launch your community, it's important to set it up so that there is already some content for members to absorb, interact with and get value from.

- Develop a content plan that includes a mix of educational, engaging, and entertaining materials.
- Include the following: Introductory video to welcome members, a clear guide to rules, information on where to get help, how to contact moderators or admins etc.
- Focus on creating authentic and valuable content will resonate with your audience - think of addressing common issues, new trends etc.
- If you have a team, encourage team members to contribute their expertise and experiences to help create diverse content

Promote the Community

- Use your business's social media channels, website, and newsletter to spread the word about the community. If you have a brick and mortar business, advertise it there too.
- Encourage your partners/collaborators to promote the community through their channels
- Make use of community radio or other opportunities to promote your community (if relevant)

Engage the Community

- Actively participate in the online group by sharing content related to the common interest, asking questions, and responding to comments
- Encourage members to share their experiences, insights, and stories with the group. User-generated content (UGC) is gold in a community.
- Showcase customer success stories to inspire others and demonstrate the value of your community

Organise Events

- Plan and host recurring events (e.g., monthly meetups, quarterly workshops, mix up online and in person) to keep community members engaged and connected.
- Collaborate with your partners to develop new activities and experiences that cater to the community's interests
- If you see a particular expertise demonstrated by a member within your community that you can see would add value, you can invite them as a guest - this could be a live video, speaking or other opportunity.

Show Appreciation

- Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of community members (e.g., through shout-outs on social media or special offers for active participants)
- Address community members by name when possible and acknowledge their contributions
- Offer exclusive access, benefits, or experiences to community members
- Design members-only perks, such as early access to new products, discounts, or exclusive content (think NFTs)
- Regularly update and refresh these offerings to maintain interest and drive engagement

Monitor & Gather Feedback

- Monitor, measure, and adjust your community-building efforts to ensure continuous improvement
- Establish a system for active listening and responding to feedback
- Monitor community discussions and social media mentions to identify common questions or concerns
- Respond promptly and genuinely to feedback, demonstrating your commitment to the community's success
- Ask community members for feedback on events, content, and overall experiences. Use their suggestions to improve and grow the community over time
- Nurture relationships: Foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere within the community by maintaining open communication and respecting diverse perspectives
- Continue collaborating with your partners to strengthen relationships and explore new opportunities for growth

Need help with building your community? I can assist you with audits of existing communities through to developing strategy and training for team members.

Contact me at contact@filucas.com.au to organise a discussion.

<https://www.filucas.online>