

Community Matters

Quiz

See who makes up the majority of your community

The inside scoop

Lift the lid on what a customer community really is and how to create yours with ROI-driven outcomes

5 questions

With customer community champion, Glamnetic

10 experts tell all...

On how to reach a community of Insiders using your marketing stack and strategies

Community Matrix and Community Personas

Meet and greet the members that make up a community, know what they want and how to serve them

Get the look with a loyalty program

omnisend



nosto



gorgias



Justuno



OKENDO



Letter from the editor



Mollie Woolnough-Rai



Over the past few months, I've set up a book club so I have an excuse to talk to my pals each week. I've tuned into my favorite fitness influencer's "pancake fam" community and exercised with other fans during live-streamed workouts.

I've even joined my favorite podcast's 30th episode on Zoom along with many other listeners. The host said my name and answered my question! Safe to say, I fangirled.

What do all these things have in common and why am I sharing them with you? Because at LoyaltyLion we believe there's a community problem in the ecommerce space. Yet these experiences were all instances that lit me up and let me connect with others – regardless of time zone or geography. They're community-based experiences that mattered to me.

Back in 1974, psychologist Seymour Sarason articulated the importance of community in this short statement: They're "one of the major bases of self-definition".

We use communities to enrich our identity, experiences, and the connections we make – giving us laser focus, purpose, and drive. Safe to say, community matters.

In ecommerce, vibrant communities prosper. At the beginning of the pandemic last year, HigherLogic reported that **81% of their clients** saw

an uptick in online community engagement. Reaching shoppers at their points of passion is what sparks deeper connections and long-term relationships that retain valuable shoppers for longer.

Just look to [Sephora's Beauty Insider Community](#) for proof. Their community are their biggest advocates and make them part of their brand story. Today there are 17 million members who are responsible for 80% of the company's sales.

Not all it's cracked up to be

That's lovely. But we've got some difficult-to-swallow news for you.

Ecommerce brands think they have a community but what they actually have is a customer base. Few consumers are completing community-based activities for the brands they love and repeat buy from.

We carried out extensive research that sought to understand what customer communities were all about. We found that email engagement was subpar, social media engagement was low and customers weren't engaging in conversations with other shoppers. The communities that we know drive ROI just don't seem to exist.

Because community matters, we've put together this collection of tips, tools, and stories to help you understand what a brand community looks like, and why it should matter to you. Check out the contents page to see what we've got in store and enjoy.

Ecommerce brands think they have a community but what they actually have is a customer base. Few consumers are completing community-based activities for the brands they love and repeat buy from.

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Customer communities: The inside scoop

Do you have a brand community?

Or, do you have a collection of customers
masquerading as one?

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The more we've talked to our merchants recently, the more we've realized that consumers are far less community-minded than we'd like to believe.

Why are we telling you this? Although for some, communities appear "wishy-washy" and a vanity metric that is difficult to measure. In reality, they're an **a)** untapped revenue stream, and **b)** a unifying force that makes sure all your marketing activities add up to something longer-term and more meaningful.

So let's dig deeper into why community matters.



Are you in the camp of retailers that think "community" is a vanity metric – difficult to justify and hard to define? **Spoiler alert: community has power.**

On average, brands with communities see a **+1,352% return on their investment (ROI) after just two years.** This increases as communities age. After 10 years, brands can see as much as a +10,000% ROI.

This is because a brand community is more than a hodgepodge collection of customers who have bought from you before.

A real brand community is a subsection of loyal customers who, on your balance sheet, are valuable, because

they interact with your brand, and with each other.

They spend more with your store over time than average, unengaged shoppers.

They have also established a deep emotional connection to your brand. They drive incremental gains for your store through shared conversations, common interests, and relationships with other shoppers.

So why aren't you seeing a ridiculous ROI from your own brand community?

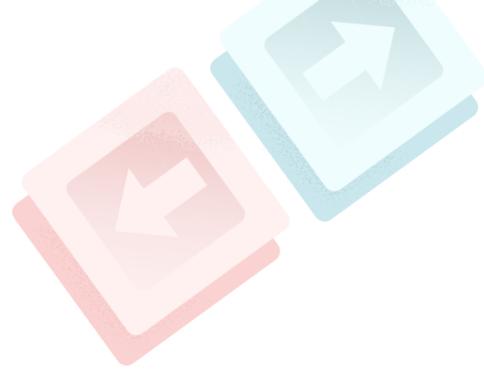
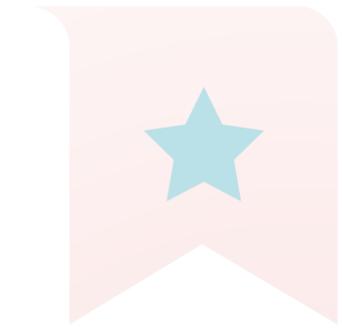
It's time to ask yourself a difficult question. Do you have one, or are you mistaking your customer base for more than it is?

Bursting the brand community bubble

To understand brand communities, we had to unpick how community-minded consumers really are.

We asked shoppers what community-based actions they complete for their preferred brands. We then used these insights to build up a clearer picture of what the community landscape looks like.

Enter the Community Matix.



Exposé: The Community Matrix and Community Personas

The Community Matrix shows that communities are made up of four, different profiles. Each profile offers different levels of value to your brand (based on participation and interaction). They also need differing levels of marketing effort to maintain relationships with them.

The goal is to reach a community of Insiders (bottom right quadrant). They need low marketing effort, but they are of the greatest value. They routinely undertake the most community-based actions most beneficial for your brand and your bottom line.

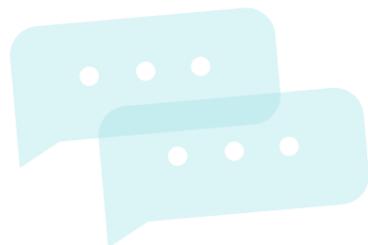


Fig. 1: LoyaltyLion Community Matrix.

“Marketing effort to maintain the relationship” is the estimated marketing spend and time needed for the customer to establish an emotional connection to your brand. “Value from the relationship” is the participation and engagement they give back to your brand (i.e level of advocacy, engagement with marketing, and conversations with other customers).

Let's learn more about the different Community Personas that exist.



Drifters

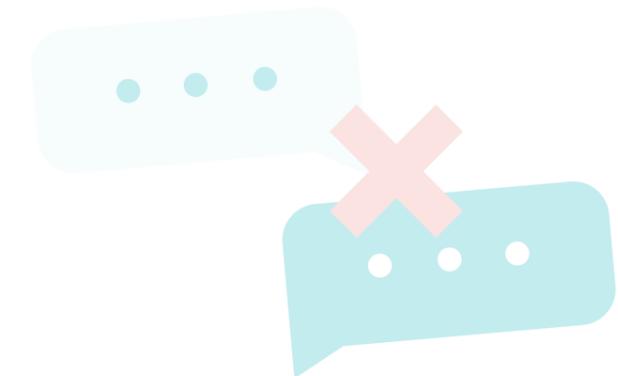
Drifters make up 14% of a community base.

These shoppers are ghosting you. They don't engage with your brand outside of purchases and are close to leaving you firmly in the friend zone. They purchased from you but that's where their emotional connection ends. They:

- **Check out as a guest** – meaning you're left with none of their details to re-engage them
- **Leave you unread** – they don't open your marketing emails or follow you on social media
- **Stay silent** - they don't recommend your brand to others or leave reviews

Drifters may be unengaged but they have potential.

They've purchased from you – that's the hard part – and already trust your product and service. With some TLC, you can push them over the line territory.



Lurkers

Lurkers make up 17% of a community base.

Lurkers are Drifters, with a glow-up. They like you – but they like you from a distance.

Lurkers are more valuable than Drifters because they are engaging. But they're still not ready to fully participate.

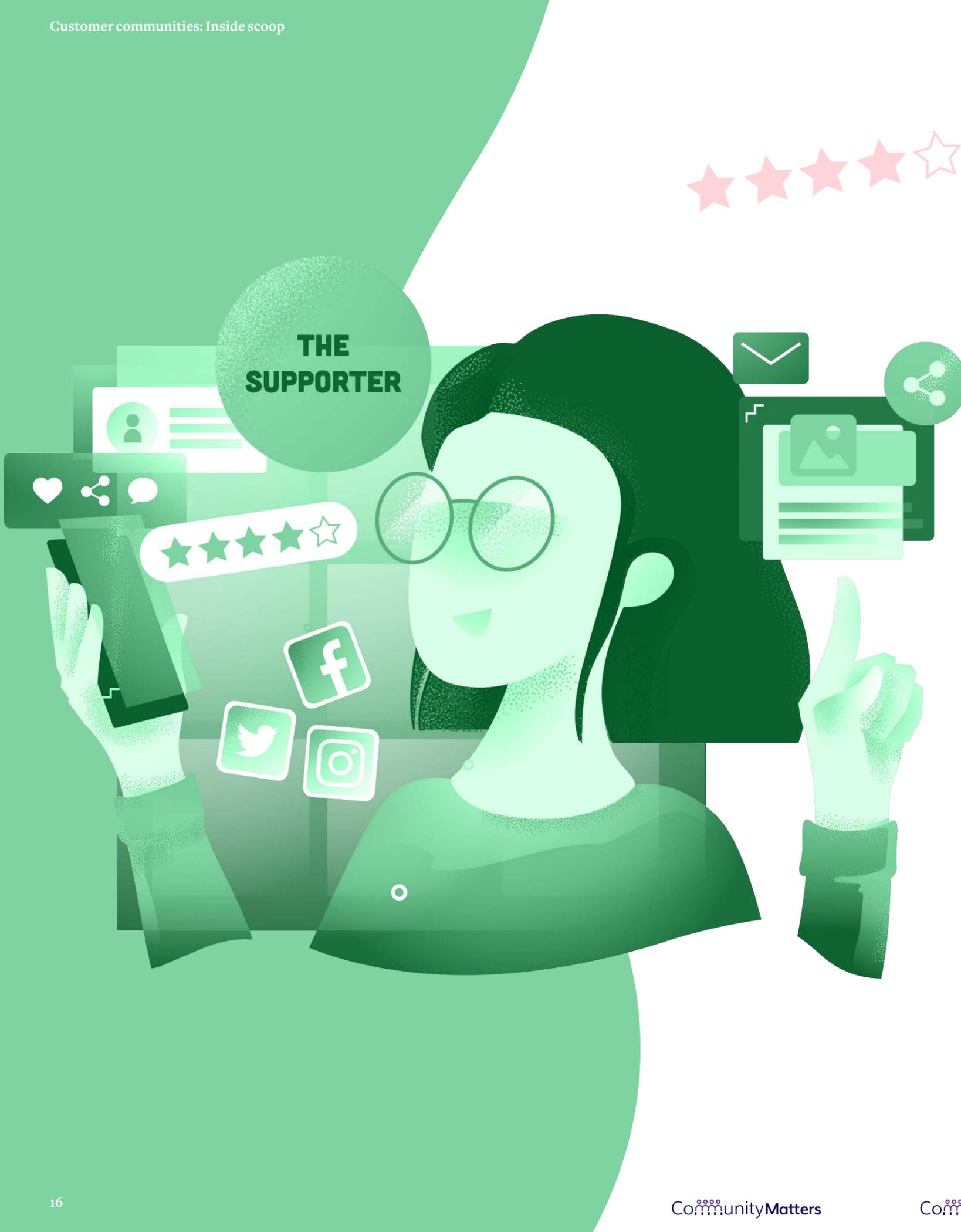
- **83%** of Lurkers log in to complete a purchase, meaning that they're open to a relationship with your brand
- **30%** open marketing emails from brands they like. They're listening to your message **but** they don't click through on the offers or content you're promoting

- **10%** follow stores they like on social media **but** that's as far as it goes – they don't help you amplify your activity by liking, commenting on, or sharing posts

Lurkers represent a difficult trade-off.

You've managed to slide into their DMs and they're paying attention, but you need to put in more time and effort to get them giving back to your community. Don't get put off though. That effort will be worth it once you push them into Supporter territory.





Supporters

Supporters make up 51% of a community base.

A Supporter is your classic community BFF. They engage with your marketing, tell others about you, and feel emotionally connected.

- **54%** of Supporters will recommend you to friends and family, helping you acquire more customers who trust you from the get-go
- **43%** will write reviews for your brand so you have more social proof that builds confidence in your brand
- **28%** click-through on marketing emails and improve your engagement metrics
- **15%** like, comment or share social media posts and amplify your brand

Many brands fall into the trap of thinking these are the best type of community members. But it takes a lot of work to get them to do community-based actions.

Unlike Insiders, Supporters aren't fully committed to playing the community game yet, but they're not far off. The good news is that they represent a good percentage of your customer base.

With just a little more effort, this large segment of your community could sub in and join you as an Insider.



Insiders

Insiders make up only 18% of your community base.

Insiders are the GOAT community members. They're your biggest cheerleaders, and they're always driving incremental gains for your brand with their community-wide advocacy.

They're extroverts and want to engage in conversations with you and other customers. They do everything a Supporter does without you having to ask. But they also do so much more:

- **54%** create original posts about stores they like on social media rather than just sharing or commenting as Supporters do
- **46%** interact with your brand by writing or responding to posts in your online community – this could be on a Facebook group or in a forum
- **54%** will chat with other customers in your online community

Insiders are powerful. They will immediately impact your acquisition and conversion metrics, but they'll also drive enormous value in other ways. They help you understand how to improve your customer experience and are the best people to undertake market research with. Their feedback likely even ends up driving your product direction.

But the percentage of Insiders who make up a community base is alarmingly low.



**THE
INSIDER**

Community-based activity	Completed by			
	Drifters	Lurkers	Supporters	Insiders
Log in to their account to complete a purchase	✗	✓	✓	✓
Open marketing emails	✗	✓	✓	✓
Follow stores they like on social media	✗	✓	✓	✓
Share personal information with brands they like (eg preferences, skin type, birthday)	✗	✗	✓	✓
Recommend brands to friends and family	✗	✗	✓	✓
Leave store or product reviews	✗	✗	✓	✓
Click-through on marketing emails	✗	✗	✓	✓
Forward marketing emails to friends and family	✗	✗	✓	✓
Like, comment and/or share social posts from stores they like	✗	✗	✓	✓
Join a store's online community (eg a Facebook group or in a forum)	✗	✗	✓	✓
Post about a store they like on social media	✗	✗	✗	✓
Write or respond to posts in the store's online community (eg a Facebook group or in a forum)	✗	✗	✗	✓
Chat to other customers in the store's online community	✗	✗	✗	✓

Figure 2: Community-based activities completed by each Community Persona.

[Take our quiz to find out which Community Persona makes up the majority of your community. >>](#)

Want Insiders? It's all about value...

Now you've met the customers who make up your community, it's time to figure out how to move them towards Insider status.

Successful brand communities see strong ROI because they offer an obviously strong value exchange.

For the effort you put into transforming Lurkers into Insiders, you get: more brand awareness, more advocacy, practical feedback, and increased trust. These all benefit your bottom line.

Meanwhile, the community you've built gives members financial and experiential benefits that motivate them to behave more like Insiders.

[Read on to see the data on what customers want from a community and the incremental gains it will bring to your brand. >>](#)

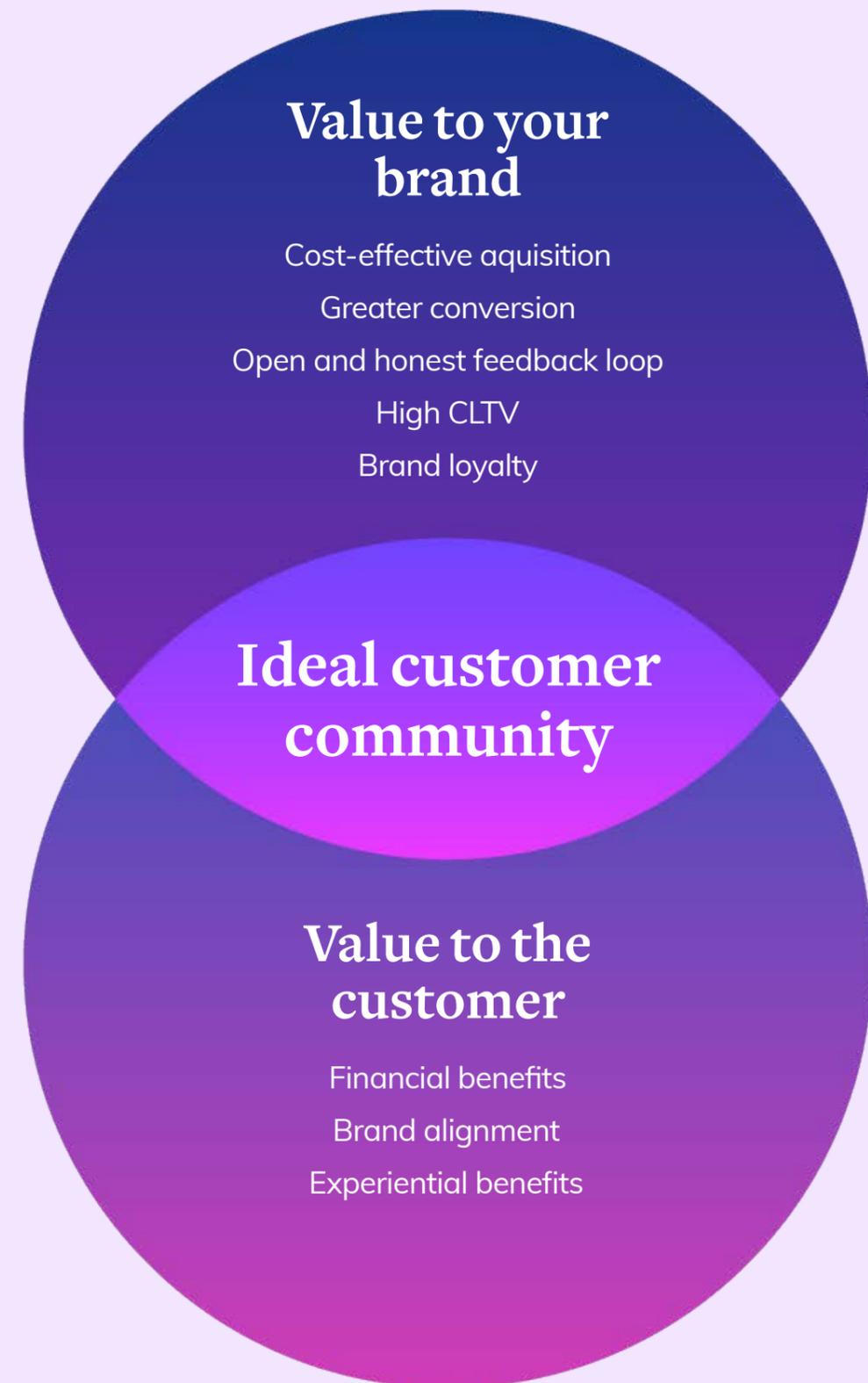


Figure 3: The value exchange of a customer community.

No-drama guide to the ideal customer community

Communities work because they have value exchange built-in. We're here to cover the three drivers that get more customers to be community-minded. And, the ongoing gains this brings to your business.

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Benefits of a community for shoppers

With our Community Personas established, we wanted to find out what motivates consumers to join a community and take part in the activities that drive the most value for brands.

The results showed three key motivators:

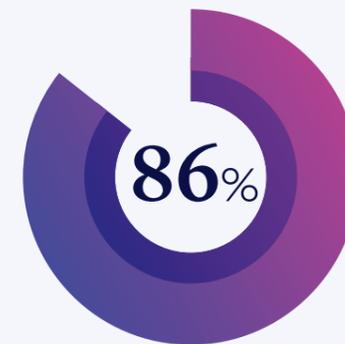
- 1. **Transactional:** Getting monetary benefits or savings for registering and participating
- 2. **Brand alignment:** opportunities to establish emotional connections with the store
- 3. **Experiential:** The ability to improve their own shopping experiences

Keep reading for the hard facts.



Show them the money: Financial motivators

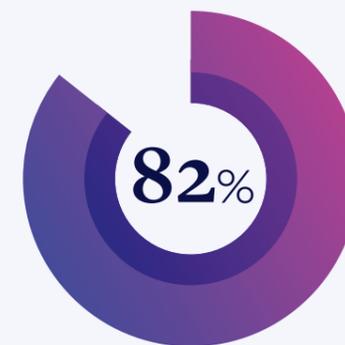
Free delivery



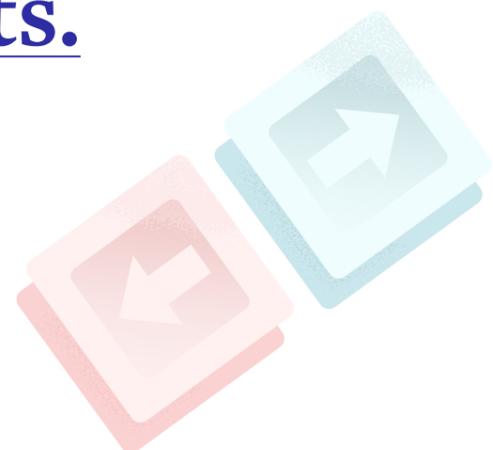
86% said free delivery was important in motivating them to complete more community-based activities

This is especially important for Drifters (76%) and Lurkers (85%)

Discounts



82% of all community members – and 78% of Lurkers – say access to discounts are a top priority in motivating them to complete more community-based actions



It's not a shock that transactional perks drive community members – especially Drifters and Lurkers. They want money back in return for completing community-focussed actions.

But, as members move towards Supporter and Insider status, brand alignment and experiential drivers take priority.

Make it official: Brand alignment

Given the transactional world we live in, it was arguably a little surprising to see that customers are looking to get under the skins of the brands they shop with.

The opportunity to create emotional connections with brands is a key motivation for shoppers to join and undertake community-based actions.

69% of those we spoke to said that being able to communicate directly with the brands they like would make them join its online community

THIS IS IMPORTANT TO **73%** OF **SUPPORTERS** AND **83%** OF **INSIDERS**

But it's not just about being able to communicate with the brand. It's about being part of the bigger picture.

Customers will be more likely to join your community if they really understand why your brand exists, where you've come from and what you stand for. If customers know your story, they feel a part of it and that they're getting more in return. This makes them far less likely to defect to other brands.



Clarity of purpose

76% of Insiders said that a greater understanding of what a brand stands for will make them complete more community-based activities



Brand story

74% of Insiders said understanding the brand's story and history will make them engage in a more community-minded way

That's 44% more than Lurkers who said this was important

In return for their community-mindedness consumers also want to feel they are surrounded by others who have come together around a common cause. They are looking for **“a place of comfort and coziness”** where members connect with each other around shared values.

48%

48% of the people we surveyed said they'd join a brand community if they could have conversations with customers who are like-minded

76%

Using the community to talk to others with shared interests is important to 76% of Insiders

80%

Being able to use the community to contribute to a cause they care about is important for 80% of Insiders

The royal treatment: Experiential

The final key driver that makes community-minded folks join and take part is the promise that the community will elevate their shopping experience through experiential perks. They want to feel confident in their decisions, get advice, and find out more about your products from other customers who have bought them.

70%

70% of customers are motivated to complete community-based activities if they can access more product knowledge by being a member

This is important for 75% of Supporters and 83% of Insiders

61%

61% said they would be more community-minded if they could access content on topics they're interested in. This is important for 81% of Insiders

As well as trust, consumers also want to feel they're getting something special in return for their interactions. Rather than a bog-standard online checkout experience.

45%

45% of customers say they would join a community if it makes them feel like a VIP

76%

76% of Insiders said that the opportunity to test new products would make them join a community

72%

For 72% of Insiders, invites to exclusive events are crucial

68%

68% of Supporters said that first-look access to sales and new product drops would make them participate more

The benefits of community to your business

Now you know what you need to deliver to get customers acting like committed community members. But what's in it for you?

When customers feel connected to brands, **more than half (57%)** increase their spending.

The other benefits of community for your brand are:

- **Cost-effective acquisition:** Thanks to more word of mouth (WOM) and brand conversations

- **Greater conversion:** Because of an improved sense of trust
- **An open and honest feedback loop:** Providing future direction for your brand
- **Higher customer lifetime value and brand loyalty:** thanks to longer-lasting, emotional connections

Effortless acquisition

Online shopping is now a collaborative activity. This means consumers are more proactive in sharing the brands they like with others.

A brand community creates an opportunity and safe space for your members to talk about your brand and drive organic WOM. This doesn't just get your name out there, but it gives them influencer status too. Community members are also the most likely to make referrals to your store.

Why should you care? Organic WOM helps you save money as you're bringing in **new customers without investment in costly acquisition channels**. Your Supporters and Insiders act as advocates on your behalf. A little can do a lot. Researchers have found that a **10% increase in WOM translates to between a 0.2 and 1.5% increase in sales**.

Greater conversion and brand trust

Engaged community members try to get others involved in the community too. Supporters and Insiders leave reviews and create user-generated content (UGC) for the brands they love. This social proof increases **trust** which makes **new customers convert quicker**.

75% of consumers say that UGC makes brands appear more authentic. And **88% of people trust online reviews** written by other shoppers. This is because someone like them has created the social proof. And they can see your products getting used IRL.

The sense of authenticity doesn't just convert new shoppers quicker. It creates ongoing trust that keeps new shoppers coming back, buying again, and getting in on the community themselves.

Open and honest feedback

Your community can become your most valuable source of **feedback**. **71% of companies** use their community for market research and 66% turn to them for product development.

Whether through experiential rewards – like enrolling members to a tester panel – or through monitoring conversations on your marketing channels,

communities tell you exactly what your big spenders want. You can also identify and improve the “squeaky wheels” before they start to negatively impact your brand.

This open and honest feedback loop is valuable for you and your future business. It's also helpful in making sure that customers feel like a key part of your onward journey.

Long-term loyalty

A big benefit of a customer community is **brand loyalty**. The more time and

effort an individual invests in it, the higher their lifetime value will be.

Not only do engaged community members spend more, but they contribute to a positive community ROI by talking about you, chatting with other customers, recommending you, and recruiting new members.

And the good news? Insiders have the greatest propensity to be loyal. Our research showed that 82% of Insiders are members of their preferred brand's loyalty programs, versus 28% of Drifters.

What's stopping you?

You now know what community looks like, what drives each persona to be community-minded, and the value they bring to your business.

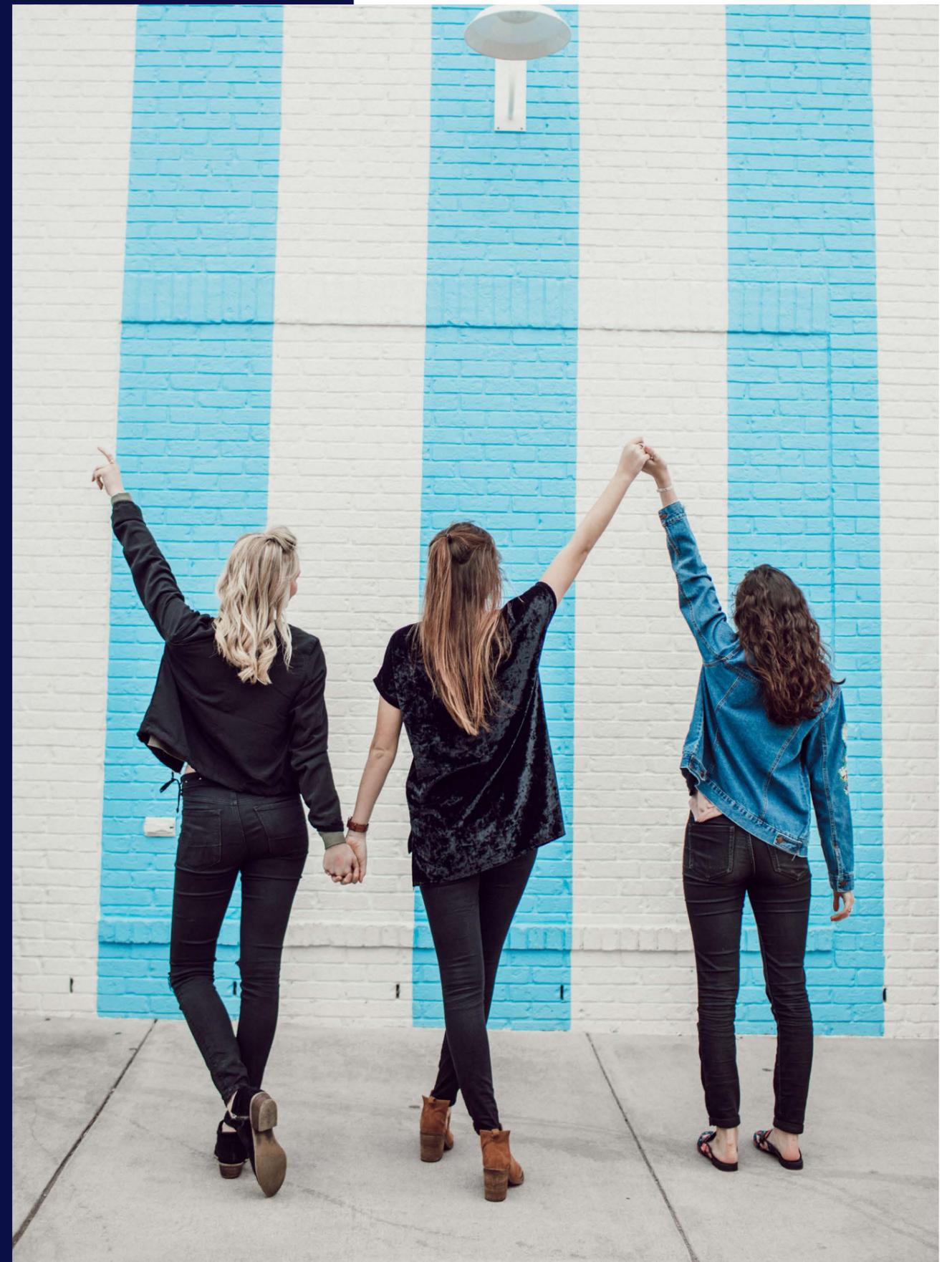
But we know what you may be thinking – another channel to manage, another plate to spin. In reality, your community is the unifying force that points all your marketing activity towards a meaningful, ROI-driven outcome.

[Keep reading for advice and examples on using your loyalty program to build your community of Insiders. >>](#)

Quiz alert: Who's who in your customer community?

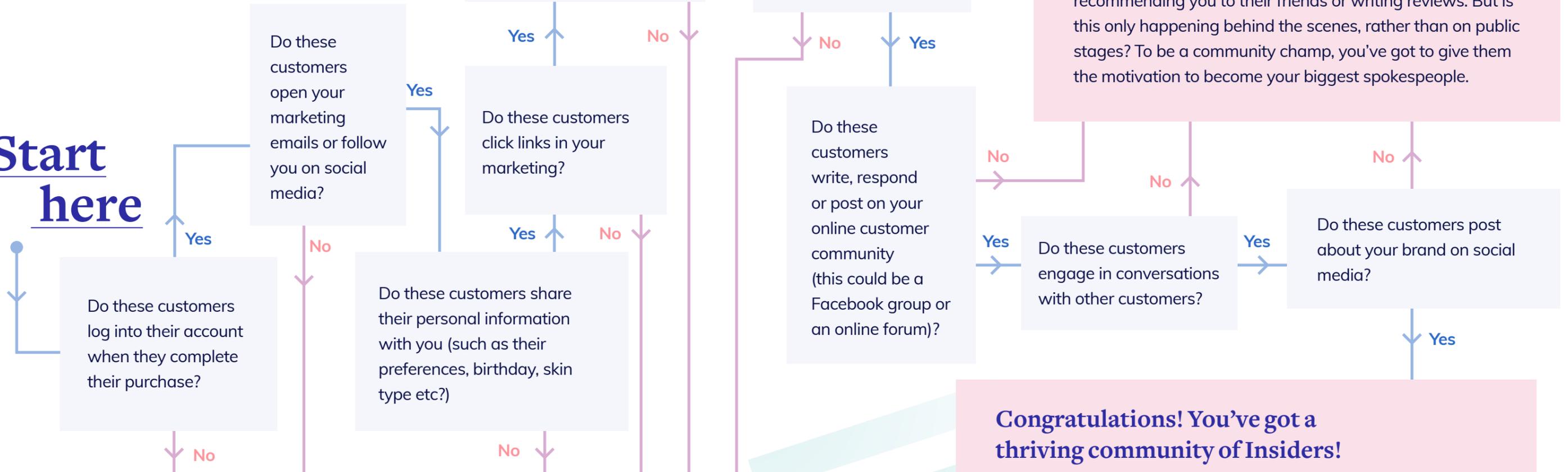
Unsure who's making up the majority of
your customer community?
Take our quiz to solve the quandary.

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Think of your customer community. We don't mean the one-offs and the gone-offs, but the people that you consider to be engaging with your brand right now. Got them in mind? Time to start!

Start here



Supporters might make up most of your community base...
 Your community probably feels like it's taking shape. You've got a pool of members that rally around you and are connected to your brand. Maybe they're supporting you by recommending you to their friends or writing reviews. But is this only happening behind the scenes, rather than on public stages? To be a community champ, you've got to give them the motivation to become your biggest spokespeople.

Emergency: You may have a community of Drifters!
 You might be mistaking your customer base for a community. Reassess if they're really committing to your brand and completing community-based activities – like engaging with your marketing or sharing you with customers. Are they just buying from you often and that's where the relationship ends? Time to up the ante.

Looks like you've could have a bunch of Lurkers on your hands
 Feeling stuck in the friend zone? Question if your community is really engaging with your marketing, and each other. Are they clicking and converting? Are they sharing and chatting about your brand with others? Capture them now before they leave the group chat altogether or you could end up with a community of Drifters.

Congratulations! You've got a thriving community of Insiders!
 You're right on the money. Your community base gets you, supports you, and are your biggest cheerleaders. They want to take up the mantle, represent you in their social circles and engage in proactive conversations with other shoppers. They're fiercely loyal and are essential to your community – and revenue – growth. Don't let them slip through your fingers though. This type of community is hard to come by.

Now you've got a clear picture of who's who in your community, time to understand what customers really want from a community and how you can reach, or ramp up, your Insiders. >>

Advice column: Using a loyalty program to grow your community

Keep reading to learn how to engage each Community Persona and move them from those dull Drifters to enamored Insiders.

CommunityMatters



Building a community doesn't need to be a full-time job. With the help of a loyalty program, you can make your brand community a unifying force that directs all marketing activity towards one, meaningful ROI-driven outcome. Here's how

Q How do I get Drifters to create an account and share their personal information with me?

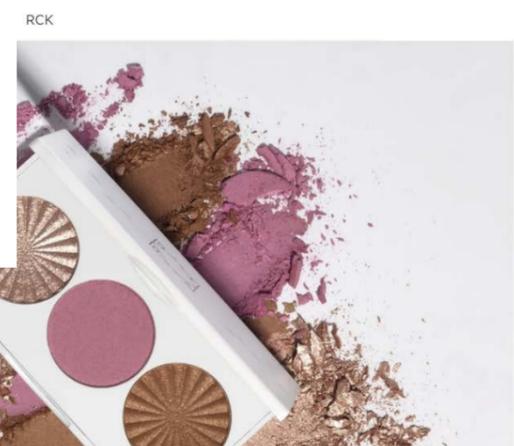
A Good. You see the value of transforming guest shoppers (or Drifters) into members you can re-engage. Customers who sign up to your site are 47% more likely to buy a second time because you're able to reach out to them and remind them you're there.

Plus, the first-party data helps you gain audience insights to create a personalized experience for users.

Unfortunately, you're in a tight spot. Only **18% of consumers** share personal information with their favorite brands. And Drifters aren't fond of creating accounts either. So how do you get them to hand over their details?

Begin by giving them incentives to join your tribe. Loyalty points and rewards should do the trick. When you set up your program, make sure your reward customers a hefty bonus of a few hundred points for creating an account.

A/B test a notification that tells Lurkers they'll get loyalty points for creating an account after they've completed their purchase (the LoyaltyLion Campaigns feature will help here). Ofra Cosmetics have a pop-up that informs customers they'll earn loyalty points for signing up and making purchases.



Q How do I get more of my Drifters and Lurkers to engage with my brand on social media?

A You're not alone. Only **18% of consumers** follow their favorite store on social media and only **15% like share, or comment** on social posts of the brands they like.

Drifters are allergic to the "follow" button. But it's because they don't know the value you bring on social media yet.

Use your loyalty program to encourage them to follow you. You can give them points for each platform they follow you on that they can trade in for rewards later on, reward them for liking and sharing your content too.

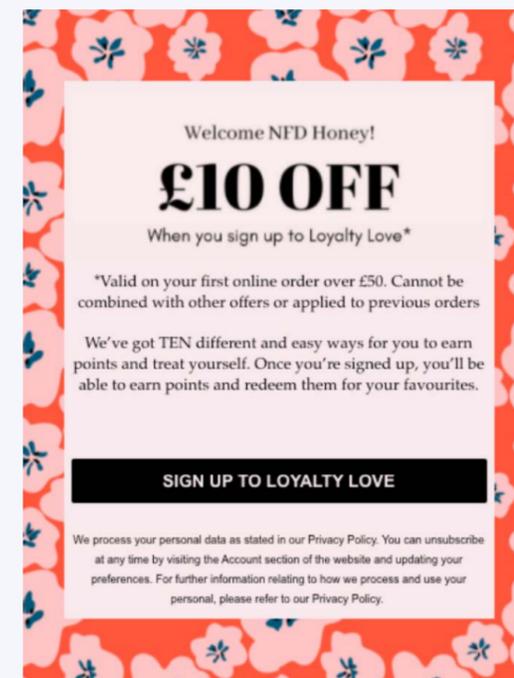
Jewelry brand, Missoma, rewards members points for Facebook likes and Instagram follows and also promotes the loyalty program in their Instagram stories.

Drifters will be itching to sign up if they see they can redeem points against future purchases.

Now onto motivating Drifters to share more first-party data with you – like their birthday, skin type, and preferences...

My advice is to use an on-site pop-up that gives Drifters value. This could be bonus points in exchange for sharing their personal information with you.

Fashion brand, Never Fully Dressed, gives members £10 off an order when they sign up for their loyalty program.





your brand values and story in an honest and compelling way. Half of the consumers said that a deep understanding of a brand's story or history would make them more community-minded. **This jumps to 74% for Insiders.**

The pet food brand **Edgard and Cooper's** social posts show customers they can trade in loyalty points to support charitable initiatives. Their **custom rewards** let shoppers exchange their points to plant a tree or donate a meal to an animal in need.



Once a member is a follower they've reached Lurker status – now to get engagement up.

Retargeting is your friend here. Use it to reach out to the customers who have shopped with you or follow you but haven't completed any more community-based actions (Lurkers, we're looking at you).

Your social activity should talk about

By telling shoppers the initiatives you support on social media, you'll be well on your way to turning Drifters and Lurkers into Supporters – and seeing your notifications blow up.

These newbie Supporters will also want to tell others who share their values all about you. Leverage this and post social content that customers



can't help but share with their friends.

LIVELY promotes double loyalty point offers on their Instagram Stories that followers would be silly to miss out on if they don't click through.



They also encourage followers to tag their BFFs in the comments of their feed posts and show them how easy it is to refer friends and get rewarded.



Q How do I get my community members to click-through on my marketing emails?

A The struggle is real. **Only 20% of community members click links in marketing emails.**

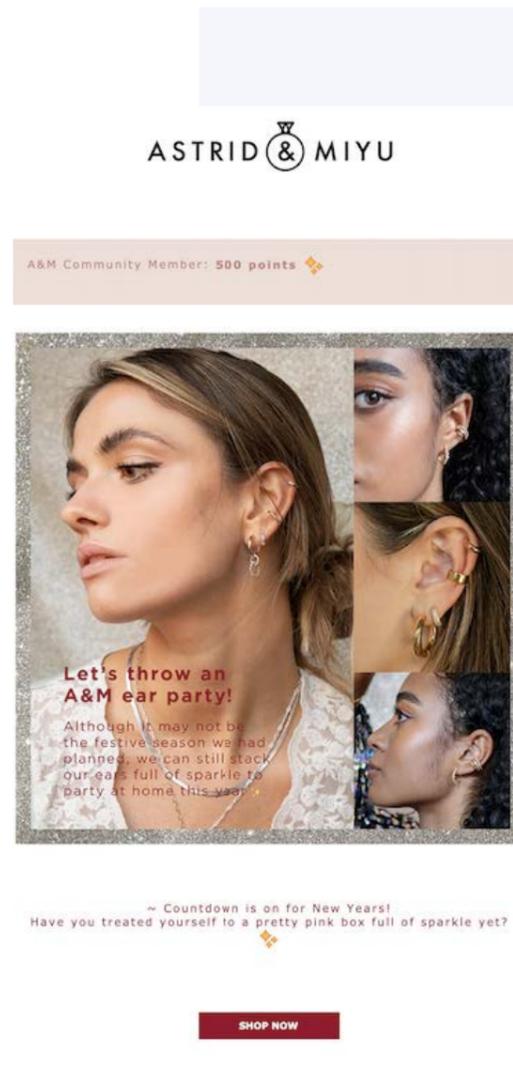


Take a step back and examine what you're flooding your customers' inboxes with, and how personal it is. When it comes to email, personalization is key:

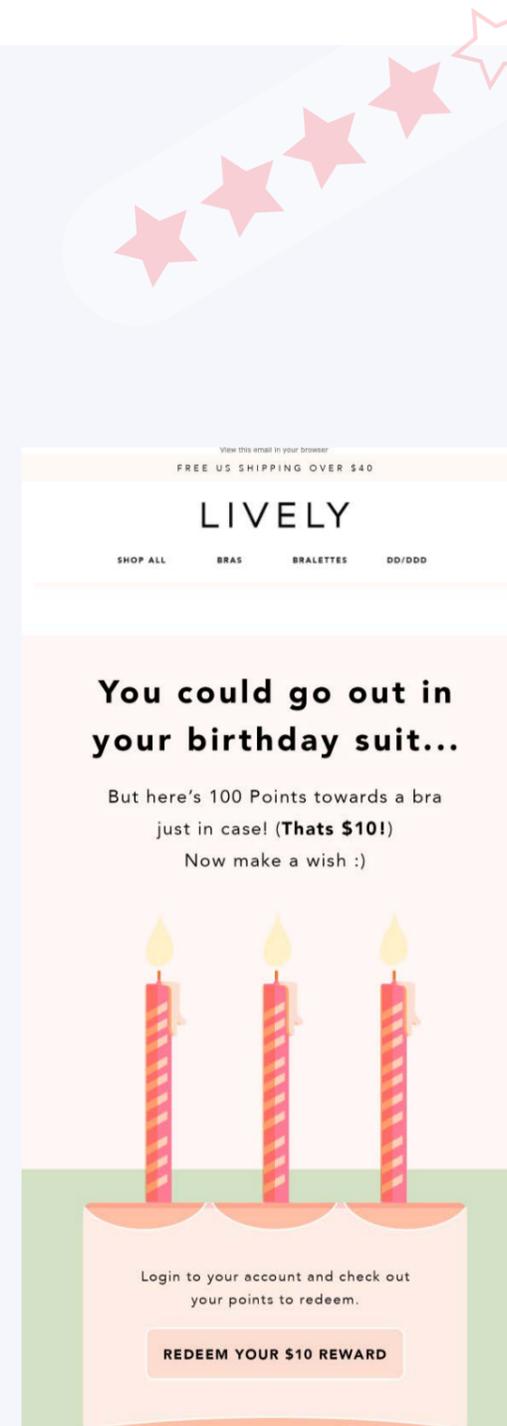
- **74% of marketers** say targeted personalization increases customer engagement
- Personalized emails deliver **6x higher transactional rates**

Make your email marketing more clickable with **personalized loyalty emails**. They have a **2.5X higher open rate than the industry average** because they're full of tailored, useful information. No more feeling like "just another shopper."

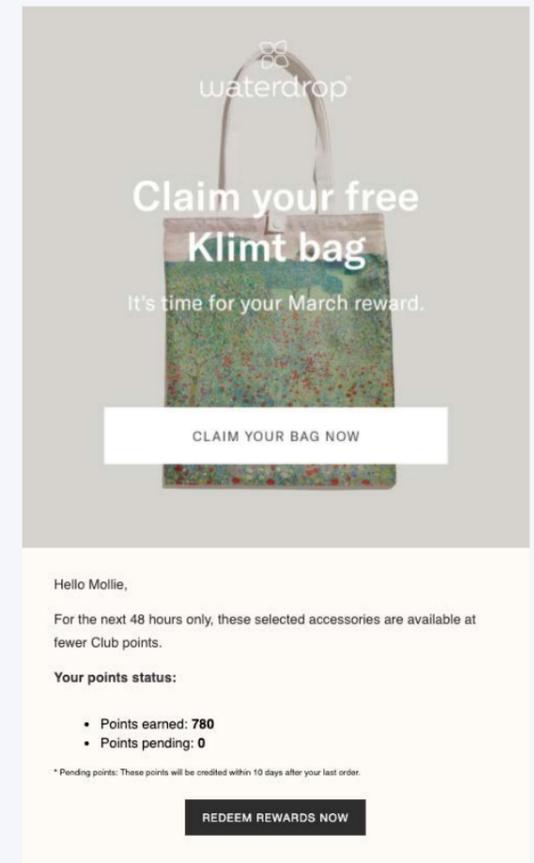
Your loyalty program is full of data. Bring it into your emails to make the contents unique to each customer. You could pull in the customers' points balance, what tier they're in and how many more points they need to unlock their next reward.



Jewelry brand **Astrid & Miyu** sends personalized emails that include each individual's personal points balance at the top. Seeing the points they've got waiting will make them itch to click-through and spend the points on their next splurge.



LIVELY sends customers emails on their birthday telling them they've got 100 points as a gift (that's equal to \$10!).



Waterdrop sends members emails when they've earned a reward through the program. When Lurkers see emails that are all about them, they're not going to bin them. They're going to open, smile, click and shop – the four-part recipe to more Supporters.

Don't get it twisted. These personalized emails don't need to be hours and hours of manual work. **Automations, flows, and triggers exist** for this exact reason. With them, you can easily sync data points across and make sure these personalized emails get sent with your eyes shut.

Q How can I get my Lurkers to go public and talk about my brand?

A Only 30% of community members leave reviews and only 36% refer brands they like to friends and family.

But, for Supporters these numbers go up:

- 54% recommend brands they like to friends and family
- 43% say they leave reviews for the brands they like

shoppers become active community members.

So how do you get more Drifters and Lurkers into the Supporter crew? And, get more customers while you're at it?

Link up your [loyalty program with your reviews platform](#) and reward customers for leaving feedback on your brand or products.

[Anmarie Skin Care](#) has linked its loyalty program with [Okendo](#) and rewards customers 200 points when they write a review.

Under each product listing, they display the star rating and how the

Supporters do refer others, they just need a nudge sometimes. Set up an automation so that when Supporters leave a review, they get [sent an email](#) telling them they'll receive points for referring a friend too. The gym brand EXO gives Supporters 1,000 loyalty points for a referral. Supporters already like what you're all about (they wrote the review didn't they?) so they're going to follow through.

Remember: It's no good rewarding customers with loyalty points for making a referral and not telling them about it.

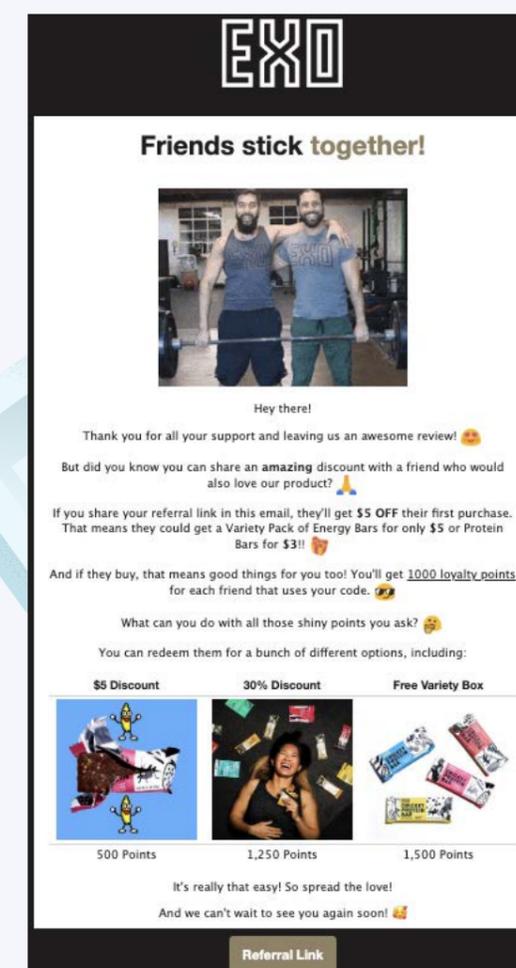
You've got to shout about the perk in emails, on-site, and on your social channels too. You could [display a notification](#) to members in the check-out that shows they'll get points for referring others. This call-to-action works because customers are happiest right after buying. Get them to share these positive vibes.

Supporters do refer others, they just need a nudge sometimes.



The more your Supporters talk about your brand and create social proof for you, the more your community will grow. Reviews and recommendations are evidence that your brand is legitimate and makes passive

product works on different skin types. Reviewers can also leave a photo and pick the "effectiveness" and "scent" of the product. This helps new customers get a grip on the product without having to test it themselves.



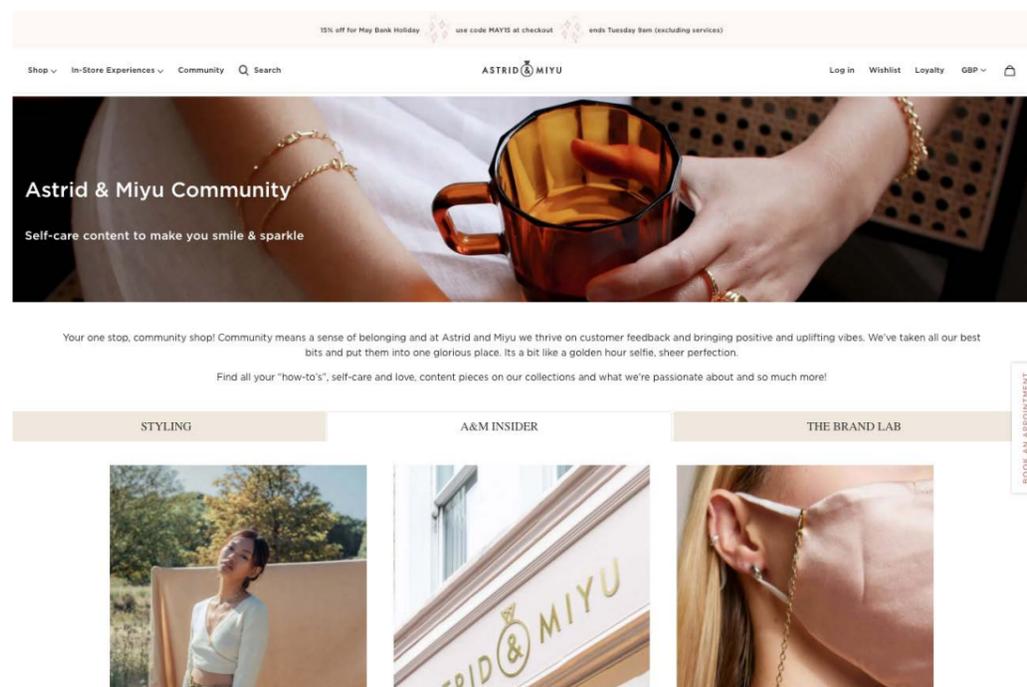
Q 81% of Insiders become more community-minded if they get access to content around topics they're interested in. What kind of content should I create?

A Create super sharable content that unites your community and shows you're in tune.

Think about what your customers will want to engage with during their downtime – without pushing your products down their throat.

If you're a health care brand, your community is interested in healthy living. Post stories of individuals' lifestyle hacks and habits. If you're selling to Gen Zs who are obsessed with Tik Tok trends, have a Q&A with the next Tik Tok rising star.

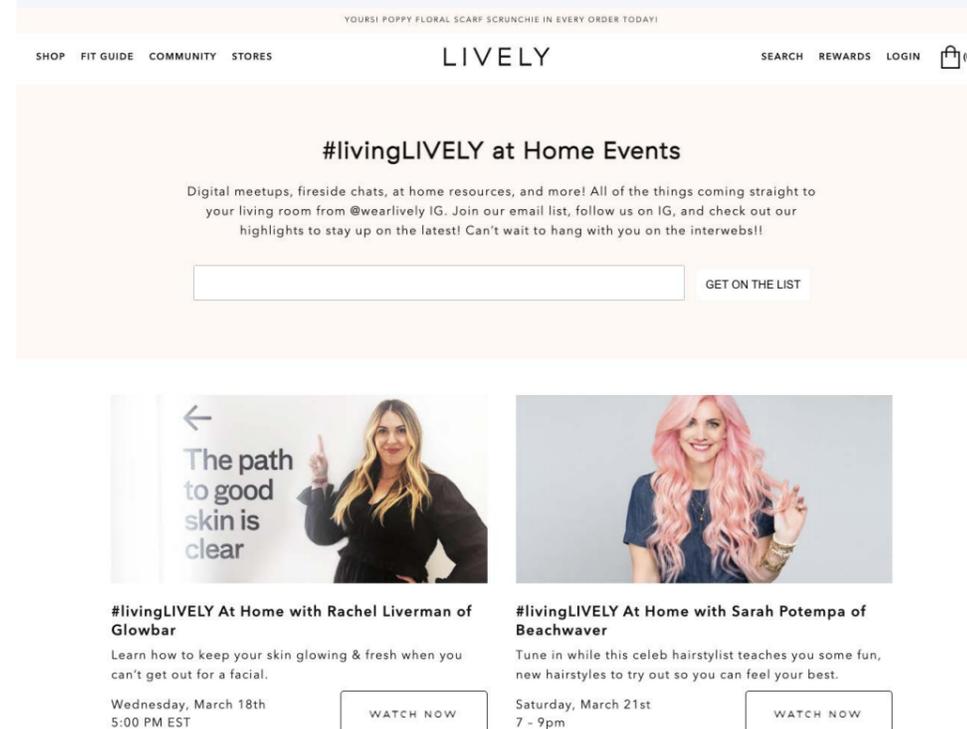
Astrid & Miyu created community-centric content during lockdown that was full of inspirational playlists and podcasts



I'm not ashamed to say I've been grooving to their "Feel Good" playlist the past few months.

The pieces showed how Astrid & Miyu cares about their community and the brand became part of their customers' daily lives.

LIVELY started up their #livingLIVELY initiative.



Community members get access to cooking lessons, meditation sessions, and stories of how leading ladies navigate the WFH sitch.

And Missoma has a community space called [“The Link Up”](#) where they share exclusive interviews with up-and-coming creatives.

If you’re already rewarding community members for social follows, signing up to your mailing list, and opting in to hear from you, then you’re going to get eyes on this thoughtful content.

Make sure you’re listening to what your Insiders like to see and create more of it.

£ GBP ▾

MISSOMA

NEW IN BEST SELLERS JEWELLERY LAYERING ACCESSORIES GIFTS OUR WORLD

the link up

We’ve got a pretty good connection, you and us. Here’s a space to find all the Missoma layers you haven’t met yet, from exclusive interviews with up-and-coming creatives to behind-the-scenes of our latest campaign collaborations.

missoma meets: charlotte rose
The model and artist on painting with her body and creating in lockdown
[READ MORE](#)

missoma meets: pip millett
Up and coming singer Pip shares the unique trick that helps her remember lyrics
[READ MORE](#)

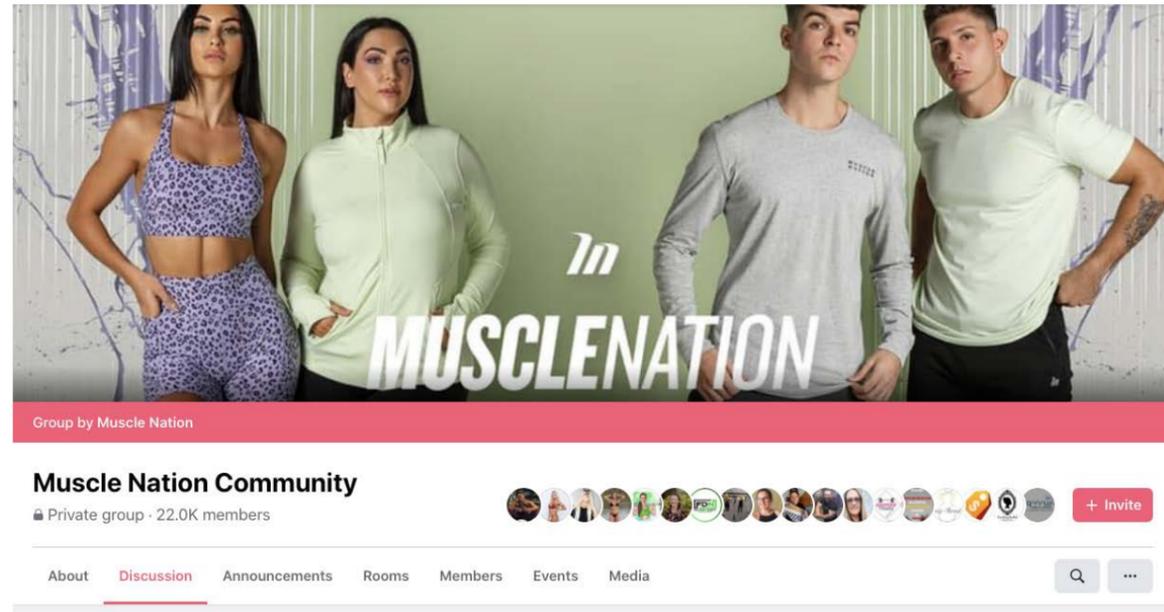
missoma meets: poppy faun
Brightonian artist Poppy reveals what it’s like to be commissioned by Playboy
[READ MORE](#)

[? Help](#)

Q How do I get my Supporters to complete Insider-like behaviors (like act as an influencer for my brand)?

A Encourage Supporters to start and take part in conversations around your brand by giving them VIP access to member spaces.

Muscle Nation, the gym apparel and supplements brand, has a [private Facebook group](#) where members get added perks like early access to new products and experiences. Members also use the space to connect and chat with others.



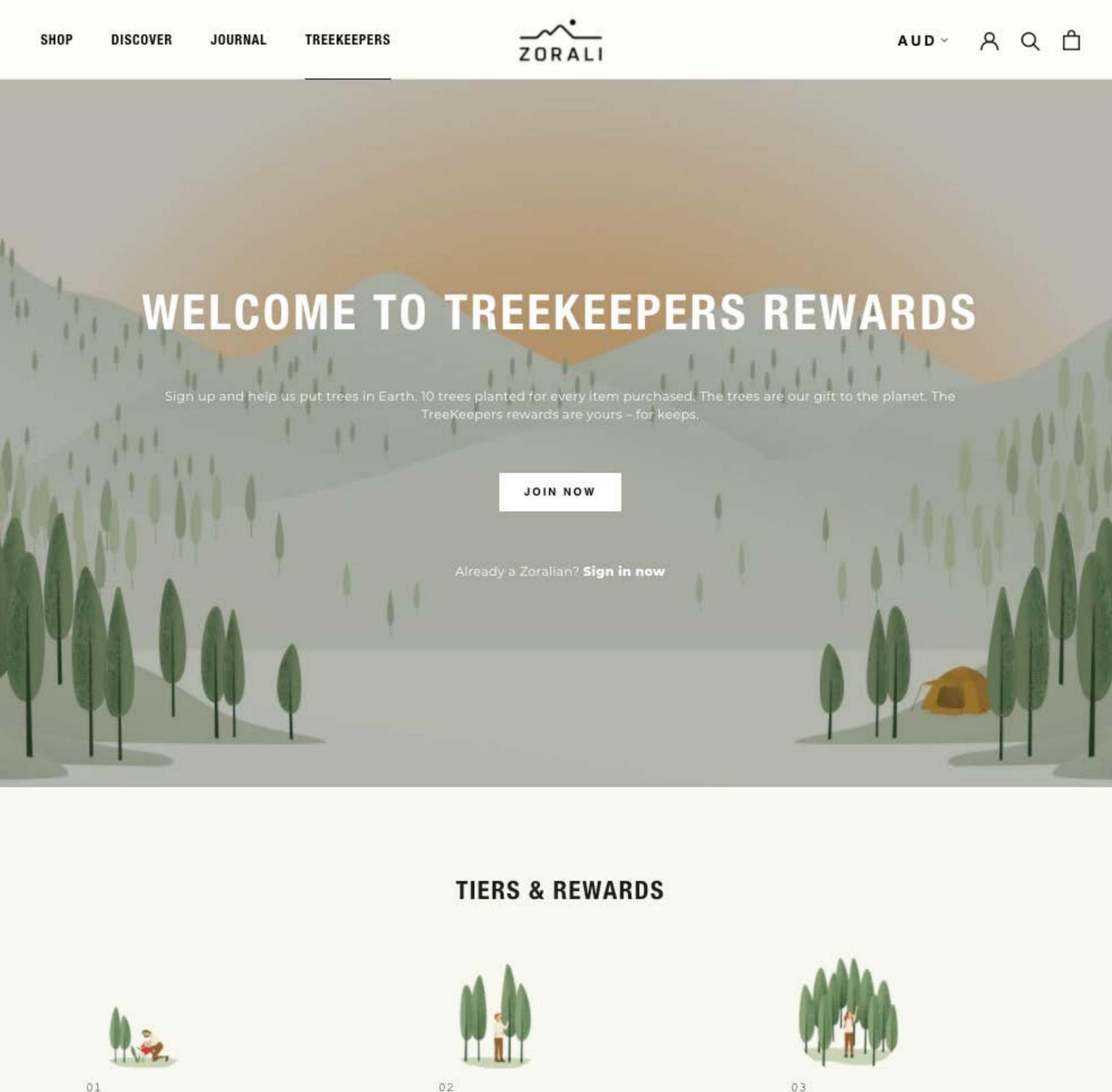
Next, make members feel they have stakes in your brand and part of your decision-making process. LIVELY uses [loyalty tiers](#) to let their most engaged shoppers vote on upcoming styles.

Seeing that you want to hear what they've got to say will make Supporters feel pretty smug. They could even post about your new product on social media if they've had a part to play in its creation (and you get more UGC to boot).

Once you've got some Supporters invested in your community space, they'll see the value of it and tell their buddies too. Bingo: more WOM and cheap acquisition.

What's Your Status?

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
BESTIE STATUS	TOTAL BOSS STATUS		
\$0! Free to join! Woot Woot!	\$115 Annual Spend!		
	POWERHOUSE STATUS		
	\$325 Annual Spend!		
Status Perks	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
EARN! Points per \$1 Spent	1	2	3
Annual Spend*	\$0	\$115	\$325
Use Points toward LIVELY faves	●	●	●
Birthday Gift (points)	●	●	●
Personal In-Store Fit Session	●	●	●
Vote on Upcoming Styles	●	●	●
Early Access to New Styles		●	●
Exclusive Events			●



Make sure you also show Supporters that your brand purpose and mission is something to talk about.

The eco-clothing brand, Zorali, rewards shoppers points (that equates to real trees they plant!) when they spend with the store or complete community-minded activities. If a shopper earns 10 points on a purchase, Zorali plants 10 trees on the shopper's behalf.

When Supporters are on the same wavelength as you, they're going to tell others who are like-minded.

Where Supporters may have recommended you behind closed doors before, they won't be able to keep experiences like this quiet. They'll want to shout about it in public spaces and you've transformed them into Insiders who advocate.

Q How do I stop my Insiders ghosting me?

A Insiders are your number one fans. But that doesn't mean you can ignore them.

If they feel left on the sidelines, they could unfriend you. You've then lost a high-value customer that was advocating for you without you needing to put in much effort. Bummer.

Insiders go mad for experiential perks though. They want you to go above and beyond to make their shopping experience unforgettable. So, surprise and delight them with VIP perks.

The beauty brand, Farmacy, gives its Insiders a first-look at sales so they can shop their trusty favs at a fraction of the cost before other customers.



Can't see this email? [View in Your Browser](#)

FARMACY

REWARDS SALE

20% OFF

+ A FREE 5-PIECE BONUS GIFT!*
CODE: **REWARDS20**

You're invited to this exclusive, members-only event!

LOG IN + SAVE

BONUS GIFT WHEN YOU SPEND \$75.
WHAT'S INSIDE:

- Honeymoon Glow deluxe mini
- Very Cherry Bright deluxe mini
- Green Clean deluxe mini
- Hydrating Coconut Gel Sheet Mask
- Strawberry Lip Bloom full size
- Canvas pouch

\$45 VALUE

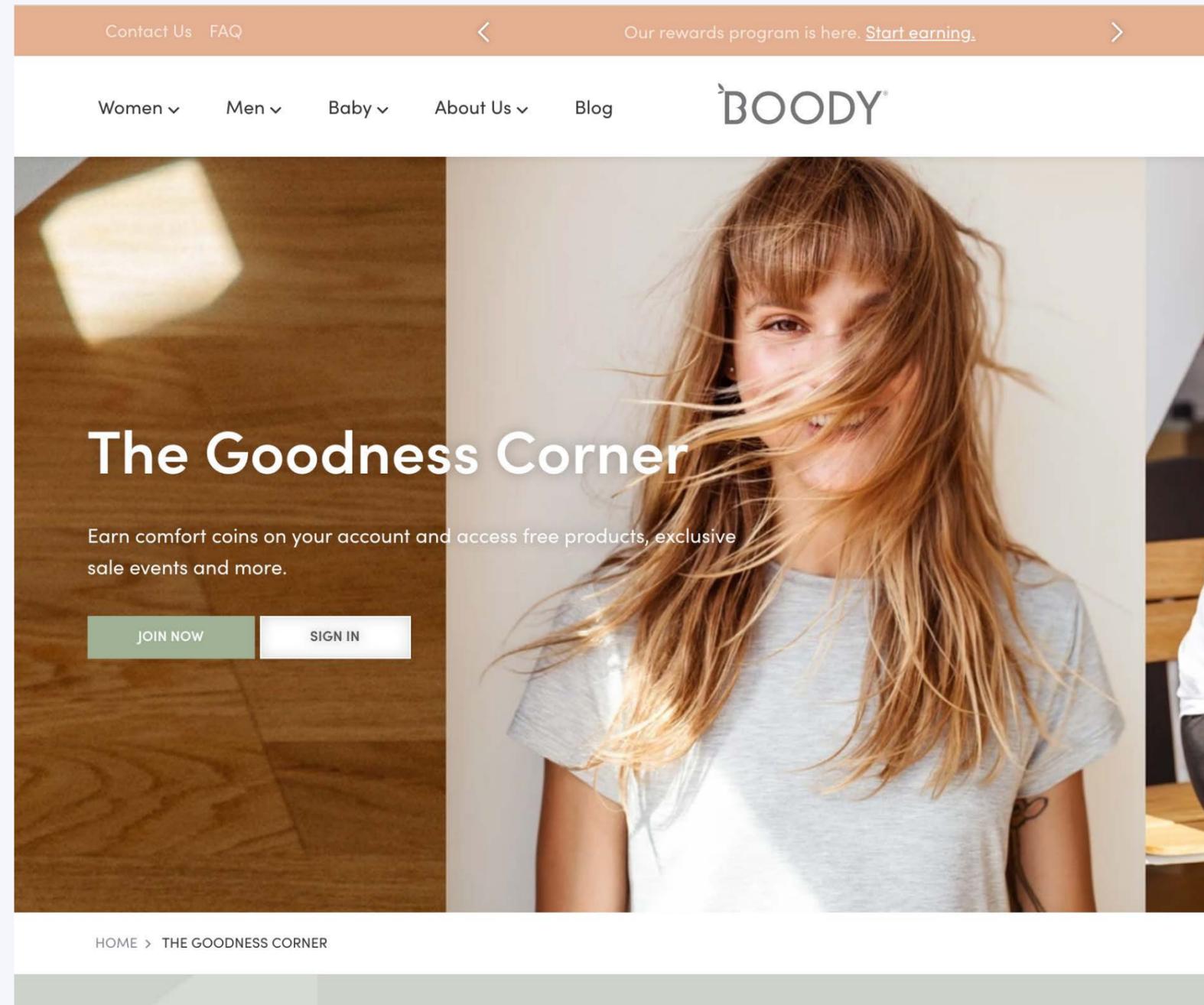
With [loyalty tiers](#), Boody gives their top-tier Insiders – or, “Goodness Advocate(s)” – access to double point shopping days that others don’t get.

To get Insiders to become long-term subscribers, you could also create a [special tier](#) in your loyalty program that gives exclusive benefits.

When a member signs up, give a [discount on selected products](#) or the entire catalog (remember: 81% of community members will become more community-minded if they can access financial incentives). Or, give them discounted shipping on recurring orders.

Subscription perks will keep your regular Insiders. They’re opting into a repeat product where they get more from you the longer they keep the subscription going.

The Insider experience doesn’t end online either. Give these high-value customers the [VIP treatment IRL too](#). When an Insider receives their order woo them with an unboxing experience. Slip in a free product or send them a “thank you” card telling them you appreciate them and the exclusive perks they get for being your biggest fans.



[Next, you’re going to hear from 10 ecommerce heavyweights about how to use the rest of your Martech stack and strategies to lock in more Insiders. >>](#)

In the spotlight

Featuring

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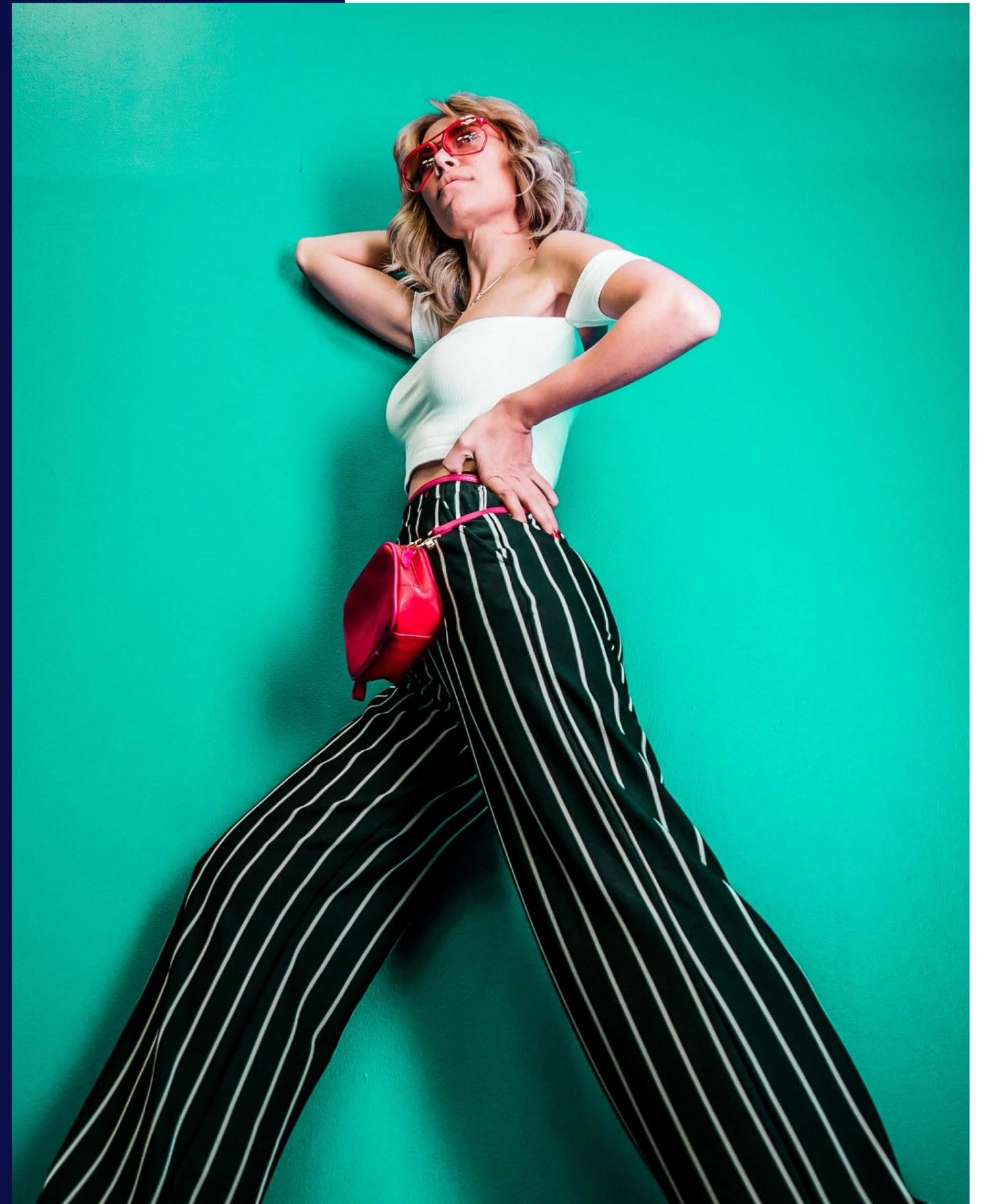
Justuno



ReCharge

ShipBob

CommunityMatters



**WE MAKE
WEBSITES**

Turning your ecommerce customers into loyal community members

As online retail continues to soar, the events of the last year have only accelerated this, with more and more shoppers turning to ecommerce stores. But how can you nurture these new online customers into loyal community members and seize the opportunity?

Because you ought to. Put simply, loyal customers (and community Insiders) spend more, shop more, have minimal acquisition costs, and are better advocates for your brand.

Here, we gather a few pointers on where to put your efforts in optimizing your ecommerce store to cultivate loyalty and grow your community base.

01. Keep it frictionless

The shopping experience should be a breeze, not a headache. Would you race back to a slow site with a cluttered interface and a weak search? Unlikely.

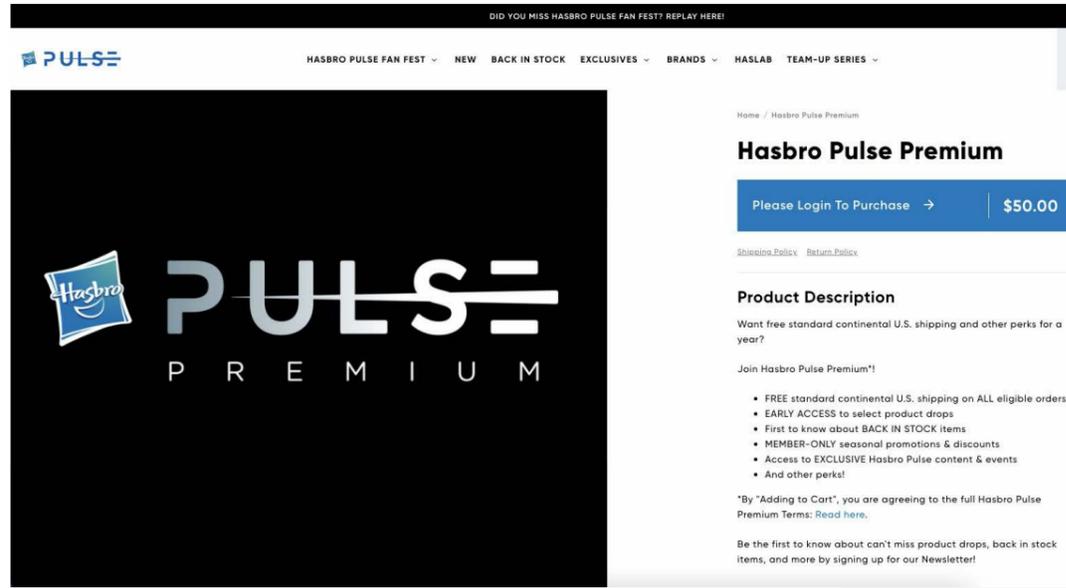
First things first, make sure your online store is easy to use so people want to revisit and become a more active community member. Focus on:

- Having clear navigation, filter, and search
- Promising good site speed
- [Being fully accessible](#)

02. Give flexible delivery

Your delivery experience is also bound to incentivize future purchases and community growth. Today's customers place a lot of weight on delivery options. So make yours appealing — here's how:

- Offer fast delivery e.g. next-day services
- Make it affordable
- Give alternatives e.g. collect in store
- Offer a premium service e.g. [TOAST's Post Pass, Hasbro Pulse Premium](#)
- Provide specific time slots
- Incentivize loyalty with shipping benefits e.g. free shipping for [Nike Members](#)



03. Ensure the checkout process is smooth

Next up, checkout. Making it easy for your customers to complete their purchases means they'll be more likely to shop with you again, tell their friends about you, and engage in other community-focused activities rather than remain a Drifter. But what exactly does an "easy checkout" look like?

- Offers wallet options e.g. [Shop Pay](#), [Apple Pay](#), [Google Pay](#), [PayPal](#)
- Provides an accelerated checkout e.g. Buy now
- Stores customer info ready for repeat-purchases

04. Nail your post-purchase comms

Now onto post-purchase. Customer communications at this stage are key to alluring the likes of Drifters to engage with your brand community beyond their purchase. Make sure you're following up on customer orders with useful and engaging content that relates to their new purchases. Some opportunities might be:

- Tutorials
- Care instructions
- Loyalty program invites
- Suggested products (tailored to their purchases)

05. Personalize for returning shoppers

Our last tip relates to the returning customer experience. You ought to use data to anticipate, excite, recommend, and deliver to your community. Specifically, you should make customizations based on customers' previous purchases:

- Customize what content appears
- Highlight the right promotions
- Show complementary products to previously bought items
- Personalize emails, SMS, packaging inserts, and advertising too
- Offer convenient re-ordering

So there we have it. We hope there are some bits in there for you to steal when building a stronger community of loyal customers throughout your online store. You'll be on your way to nurturing a group of engaged Insiders before you know it!

Want to chat more about fostering loyalty throughout your ecommerce store? We're just a few clicks away — [get in touch with our Shopify experts.](#)

About We Make Websites

Respected as the [Shopify Plus agency for international brands](#), We Make Websites design, develop, and optimize Shopify Plus stores to help global businesses get the most out of this platform.



Author
Eve Rouse,
Senior Content Editor

shoelace

How to use paid media to keep your community happy (and converting!)

When we discuss paid media, it's almost always associated with conversions. We run ads so our products are seen and purchased, then measure their success by how much revenue we generated, and how high our return was.

But with rising acquisition costs and markets becoming incredibly saturated, we're seeing more and more leaders in the space using paid media to not just make sales, but to connect with their customers and cultivate their communities. Emerging brands need to take a similar approach if they want to stay competitive.

Over the last five years, Shoelace has helped hundreds of merchants tell powerful brands stories with ads that their audiences want to be a part of. We do this with Customer Journey Marketing, a proven method that aligns with where your buyers are in their journey to show them specific messaging and creatives to give your ads a personalized touch.

But how does Customer Journey Marketing help build a community? By recognizing that the customer journey itself does not end after a purchase has been made. The same methodology we used to initially drive conversions can be reapplied to engage with Drifters to Insiders alike.

At the highest level, it's a balancing act between making sure past purchasers are properly included in campaigns

that prompt them to take additional action (i.e. outside of making a purchase), and excluded from campaigns that could have a negative impact.

For instance, creating campaigns that persuade Drifters in your community to sign up for your newsletter to get exclusive promos is a great way to engage and connect with them. While setting up campaigns asking your purchasers for reviews or UGC in exchange for special perks will make Supporters feel more connected to you and Lurkers like they're part of the conversation.

It's a balancing act
between making sure
past purchasers are
properly included
campaigns that
prompt action

Want to make your VIPs feel even more special? Use lists (such as customer or email) to properly identify and segment your Insiders to reward them with early access promotions or first dibs on new products. One of our clients has an exclusive subscription service that is only advertised to their VIP customers, and in the last 30 days that ad bolstered a ~13x ROAS! Win-win!

That said, having proper exclusions in place can arguably be even more important. If a long-time Supporter or Insider is suddenly seeing campaigns promoting an impressive discount for first-time shoppers, they may not feel as valued as they did before. Similarly, if your community is being shown campaigns introducing them to your brand, that disjointed experience is enough to turn them off completely. Setting up the proper audience exclusions is the best way to make sure you're committing to your community from both ends!

As media buyers, we understand that an ad's primary objective is to drive conversions, but it's become increasingly apparent that paid media goes well beyond just bottom-line sales revenue. Investing in strategies such as Customer Journey Marketing which acknowledges the integral part your community plays in scaling your business could very well be the keystone that puts you on top!

Investing in strategies such as Customer Journey Marketing which acknowledges the integral part your community plays in scaling your business could very well be the keystone that puts you on top!

About Shoelace

Shoelace manages digital media buying for 400+ large and emerging DTC brands. Having leveraged Customer Journey Marketing, our leading position in the industry means we are able to attract and train the best media buyers in the world to provide powerful brand-first advertising experiences.



Author
Erika Cole,
Marketing Specialist



How to engage and listen to your community

Your brand's community should grow in a natural and personal way. You shouldn't need to directly call Lurkers or Drifters to action for them to join and participate in it.

First, growing a community starts with having a great product and a mission that resonates with your audience. When you have these, people will engage and share your brand with their friends.

“Your job as an entrepreneur, business owner, or leader within your organization is to create a product and experience so amazing – so unique from all the other alternatives in the marketplace – that they can't help but share it with their friends and talk about it and rave about it.”

- Eric Bandholz, Founder of Beardbrand

With a great brand and mission, you'll organically build an active community of interested customers, but how do you motivate them to take action?

Consistency and relevancy

There are a variety of channels and platforms to engage with customers on, but not every channel will be right for your brand or be the best use-case for your target audience. Test channels to discover where your audience is most interested.

Find the best entry points for engagement and use those moments to gain more Supporters and Insiders

If you engage with customers regularly, they will start to notice you, recognize

you, and follow you. As you build your following, you will also build engagement. Higher engagement leads to more action.

Whether on Twitter or TikTok, brands can let customers get to know them, their interests, and thoughts. Over time, these connections translate to your brand. By keeping direct messages (DMs) open, any type of community persona can reach out to ask the brand questions and engage.

But, how do you listen to your community?

Having a loyal customer base filled with Supporters and Insiders gives your

brandanopportunity:youcaninnovate your products and brand based on customer feedback. Not only does this nurture customer relationships, but if you build the products your customers have expressed interest in, you will continue to drive sales. Before gathering feedback, it's important to have a vision for your brand and your product roadmap. Based on your vision, you should listen and include customers in that roadmap.

For example, a top DTC whitening brand, Snow Teeth Whitening, sends surveys to Insiders through email to ask them what products they'd be interested in next. This survey has a 60% completion rate. Every day as customers purchase products, Snow is getting real-time feedback. For the product they decide to create next, Snow will build a lookalike audience on Facebook to target those customers that voted for it.

Another example is the top skincare brand, Tracie Martyn, who features an [on-site quiz](#) to engage with their community, learn more about them, and sync collected data to other marketing channels. They can use all collected data in their quiz to re-market through email, Facebook Messenger, SMS marketing, or even on Facebook ads.

So, how do you invest in building a community?

The truth is, you will always want to do more than what your time and money allows. Find the platforms that feel natural to you and your customer to engage on, whether it's blogging, video, or social media. How one brand builds a community could be totally different from your approach, so it's okay to recognize there are other ways to build a business.

How one brand builds a community could be totally different from your approach, so it's okay to recognize there are other ways to build a business.

About Octane AI

[Octane AI](#) provides an all-in-one platform for engaging quizzes, data collection, and personalized Facebook Messenger and SMS automation. Thousands of Shopify and Shopify Plus merchants use Octane AI to connect, convert, and retain customers by personalizing the customer journey and giving customers the confidence to purchase. Our vision is to build a more humanized and personalized shopping experience for all.



Author
Katie Krische,
Strategic Partnerships
and Marketing Manager

omnisend

Build your customer community using email and SMS

Surviving and thriving as an ecommerce marketer requires using multiple channels for building a strong customer community with repeat customers.

Email and SMS marketing are two strong-performing channels that engage every type of customer in your community. With year-over-year conversion rates for both channels **increasing more than 100%** in 2020, it's important to know how to effectively use them to nudge your community toward greater commitment to your brand.

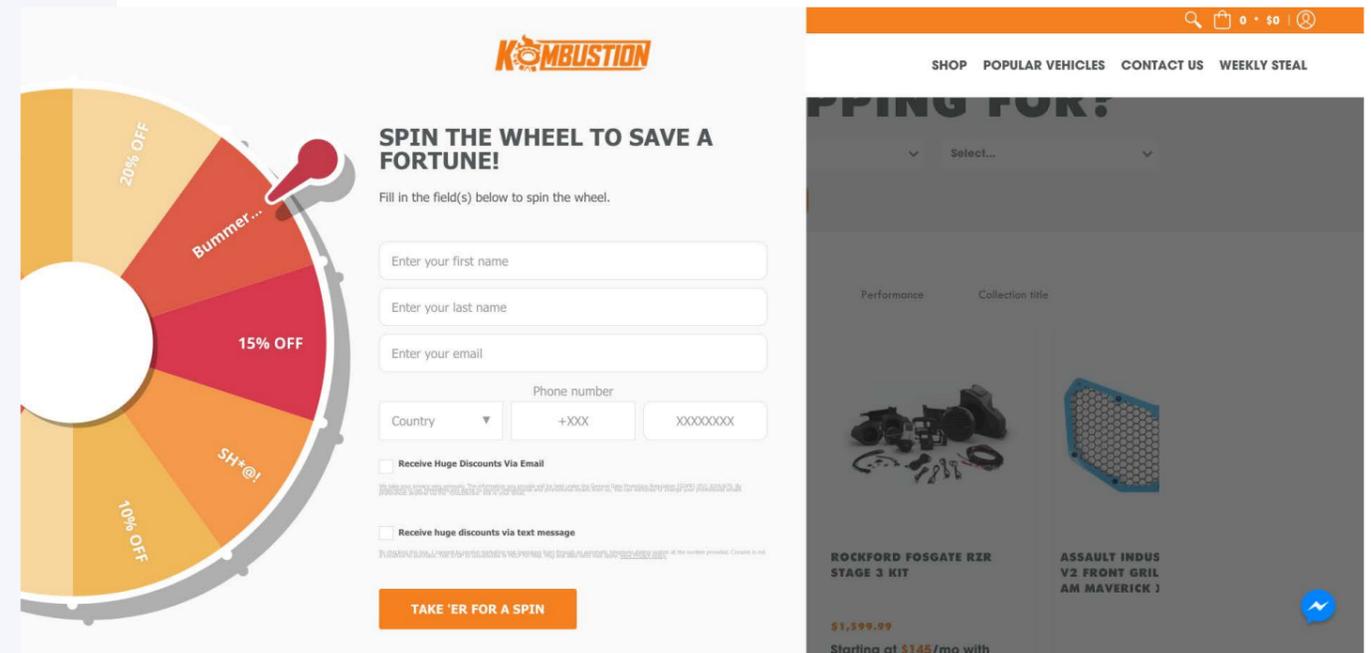
Grab the Drifter's attention

You know the type: the shopper who checks out as a guest and doesn't typically open your marketing emails. The first challenge with engaging Drifters is persuading this consumer to share some personal details.

Use a pop-up form on your website that encourages these tough-to-engage folks to sign up for both email and SMS marketing messages. With a nearly **400% increase in marketing SMS sent in 2020**, text may be the new channel Drifters respond best to.

To make signing up more appealing, add a fun twist with gamification. For example, a "spin the wheel" form allows Drifters to "win" a better incentive by opting in.

While Drifters may sign up for your marketing list, they tend to ignore marketing messages. This is why automating relevant and engaging behavior-based email and SMS messages from the very start is critical.



Get the Lurker in the game

You probably have a sizable portion of your community who make purchases through an established account and open your emails. Some even appear on your social channel as fans.

They're great customers, but silent. Sow the seeds that will give reason to be vocal about your brand.

- **Step one:** personalize. Build upon segmentation efforts based on how customers interact with your brand. When you deepen the data with spending and engagement behaviors, you can craft the right content that speaks to your audience
- **Step two:** strengthen the relationship with automation. Utilizing automated workflows to nurture the customer-brand relationship, such as post-purchase messaging, makes Lurkers feel more connected and increases repeat sales
- **Step three:** cultivate stellar customer support. Integrate your email provider with helpdesk partners who can expand customer service needs, such as Gorgias.

Boost the Supporter's activity

One level beyond the Lurker, a Supporter actively engages with marketing

emails, on social media, and by sharing reviews.

Use email and SMS marketing to encourage Supporters to leave product reviews and create user-generated content (UGC) by sharing photos of their purchases on social media. You can later use these reviews and testimonials by including them in marketing messages, especially automated ones, to encourage both Drifters and Lurkers to engage.

For example, featuring testimonials of top-rated products in a welcome and browse abandonment series provides social proof – encouraging them to engage and purchase.

Nurture your dream customers

If you motivate Drifters, Lurkers, and Supporters enough, you're well on your way to cultivating the most elusive group every merchant clamors for – Insiders. They are the ambassadors who praise you from the rooftops.

These customers are your true VIPs – treat them as such. Send them an SMS telling them they have preferred access to sales and VIP-only offers. Product reviews are great for influencing consumers to purchase. Lean on your Insiders for help. You could drop them an SMS asking

them to leave feedback for recently-purchased products – complete with a handy link directly to the review page.

Or email them with invites to special events, giveaways, and the chance to provide feedback on upcoming products and styles.

Even more, using this Insiders segment inside of your combined automated email and SMS workflows you can deliver custom messaging, such as a bonus offer, for different types of automated messages – allowing the automation to send the right message at the right time to the right consumer

via the right channel. Talk about a great customer experience!

Incorporate this segment into your marketing automation, but feature different incentives, verbiage, and messaging paths than Drifters and Lurkers.

Building these customer relationships doesn't have to be difficult. Your best bet for creating a sizable community that will advocate for you, and also provide the insights you need to improve your customer experience, is to use an ecommerce marketing platform that will segment your customers and offer powerful automation capabilities through multiple channels.

About Omnisend

[Omnisend](#) is a powerful email and SMS marketing automation platform built for high-growth ecommerce businesses. With advanced automation workflows, customer segmentation features, and a multitude of channels to reach the customer (via email, SMS, push notifications, and more), Omnisend enables marketers to drive sales at scale while building lasting customer relationships.



Author
Greg Zakowicz,
Director of Content



Building community using reviews and UGC

For online merchants, UGC – whether it takes the form of reviews, images or videos – provides a customer-centric shopping experience that builds community and boosts conversions.

We'll cover three ways reviews and UGC help online merchants build a brand community that drives loyalty and growth for the long-term.

They build trust and authenticity

In the early phases of building a brand community, merchants thrive when they focus on two things: trust and authenticity. In fact, **90% of consumers** claim that authenticity is incredibly important when they're choosing a brand to buy from. The trouble is, shouting about how authentic you are is very... inauthentic. Instead, online merchants must put the power in their customers' hands to provide the proof for them.

Sharing genuine reviews and UGC collected from customers across your website and marketing channels allows you to showcase your customer's brand loyalty which builds trust with those who may be less familiar with your brand.

Baby apparel and accessories brand, **Freshly Picked**, knew that a strong brand community was crucial for building trust with new parents. In the parenting world, word-of-mouth reigns supreme, so the brand relied on populating their site with encouraging reviews and UGC from past customers to turn skeptical moms and dads into eager buyers.

They help you deliver optimized customer experiences

When customers have a positive experience, they come back for more. **95% of customers** say that customer service is important when choosing a brand to purchase from and stay loyal to. By ensuring your brand provides the best-in-class customer support, you can motivate Lurkers and Drifters to become loyal brand advocates (or Insiders) that recommend you to others.

Reviews allow you to collect valuable feedback, which when acted upon, improves your ongoing customer experience. This applies to both products and the customer service you provide, which ties into the customer-centric vision that the most successful online merchants share.

If your customers have left less than 5-star reviews expressing concerns around a specific attribute of your product, you can use this information to fuel product development and sell more products that your community loves!

A great customer example is the apparel brand [LSKD](#). They use customer reviews to improve their products and to better align with customer wants and needs. Involving customers in this part of the process creates a community around their brand, and ensures they're giving their customers what they want.

Content management tools such as review replies, Q&As, and helpdesk integrations allow you to follow up on less than 5-star reviews and provide personalized, instant solutions. This helps to inspire the customer's confidence in purchasing with you while giving them an instant solution to their concern or query.

They build trust and authenticity

Loyal customers are crucial for building brand trust and community. The more loyal customers you have, the better chance you have at growing your brand, delighting more Insiders, and reaching more markets.

However, your strategy to engage and satisfy these customers needs to be a bit more granular. Since your most loyal customers actively engage with your marketing, they're expecting personalized experiences tailored to their desired wants and needs ([91% of consumers](#) are more likely to shop

with brands who provide relevant offers and recommendations).

Using the valuable product and customer attributes that your reviews provide, you can segment your audience and deliver hyper-personalized messaging. This can be in the form of product recommendations or product education email campaigns that engage customers and encourage future purchases.

Dog food brand [WAG](#) does exactly this. Using Okendo's [Attributes](#) feature to capture insights about buyer's dogs, including the age of the dog and their eating habits, WAG is able to fuel their product recommendation email campaigns based on these attributes.

By offering this kind of relevant, engaging content, your audience feels recognized and appreciated. You're also exposing them to well-targeted, perfectly positioned items which increases the chances of additional purchases being made, boosting your customer lifetime value.

Ultimately, asking customers for reviews opens up a two-way dialogue that helps you create deeper relationships with your community and generate engagement.

Ultimately, asking customers for reviews opens up a two-way dialogue that helps you create deeper relationships with your community and generate engagement.

About Okendo

[Okendo](#) is a customer marketing platform with a suite of tools for collecting and showcasing reviews and UGC on-site including product ratings and reviews, photos and videos and Q&As. Fast-growing consumer brands like Knix, SKIMS and Zitsticka use this content to build shopper trust, drive conversions and maximize CLTV.



Author
Rachel Tyers,
VP of Strategic Partnerships

nosto 

Clever (persona)lization that wins every kind of shopper

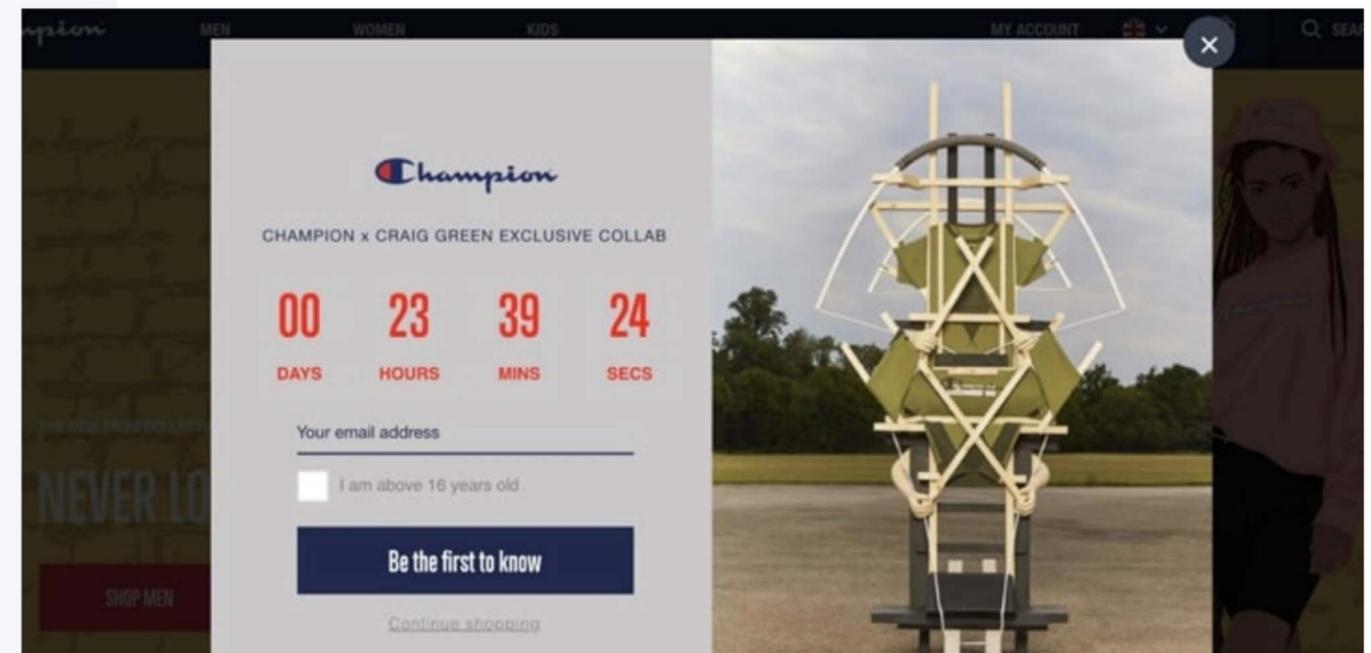
It's common knowledge that no two consumers are the same - whether they're shopping on-site or engaging with your brand through off-site channels.

Let's look at how a personalized shopping experience differs based on each key community persona, plus some quick and clever tactics to act on each persona's needs and challenges.

Delighting the Drifter: Level up the homepage experience

One way to pique the interest of Drifters, encourage them to view more products or to become a part of your community is to get them excited about what you have to offer. The home page sets the tone for every shopper's experience. Use a home page pop-up that offers an incentive for Drifters to learn more about your brand is a simple (but effective) place to start.

For example, to generate hype around an upcoming clothing drop, Champion showcases a pop-up that triggers when a shopper lands on the homepage. It contains a countdown timer that not only creates excitement around the upcoming release but also encourages shoppers to sign up for updates on other drops. This play on urgency communicates that the shopper only has a limited amount of time to take advantage of your great offer.



Luring in the Lurker: Enhanced email communication and FOMO marketing

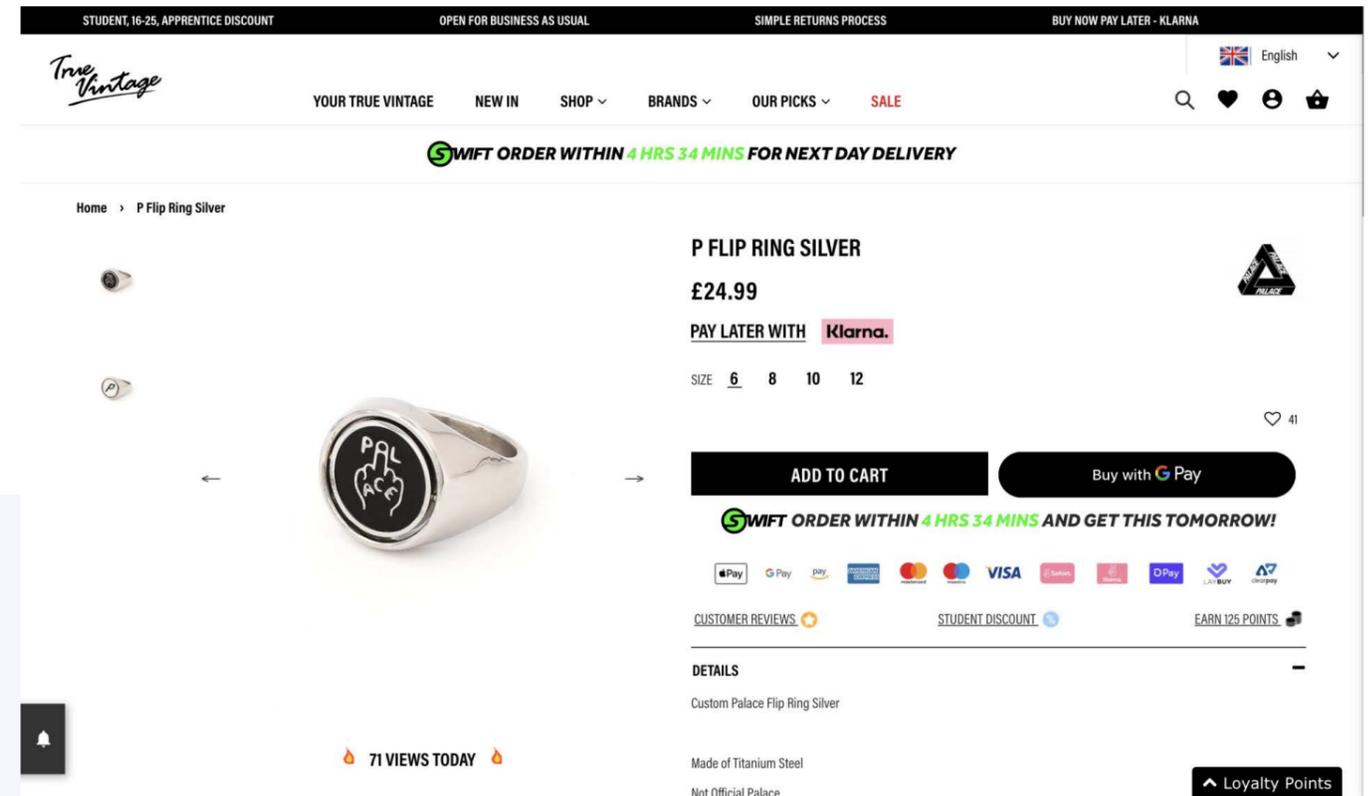
The upside with Lurkers is that they've already shown an interest in your brand on-site. They just need a little nudge to convince them to get to know you outside of your website.

This is where email marketing makes a difference. Using a combination of informative content and relevant products (like in the example from Skin City), you can spruce up traditional newsletters with helpful content - such as delivery notices, limited-time discounts, and products that are relevant to that specific shopper's purchase habits.

Once the shopper has engaged with the contents of your email and landed on your website, this is where FOMO marketing comes into play.

FOMO marketing is a subtle way of steering a shopper towards checkout by leveraging a shopper's love for social proof.

True Vintage displays a next-day delivery message on their Product pages to customers who make a purchase within a limited time frame. In the example, next-day delivery is communicated on a banner at the top of the page as well as underneath the "add to cart" button.



Supporting the Supporter and illuminating the Insider: Top tier perks for loyal shoppers

While every shopper should be treated like a VIP customer, the ones who support and advocate for your brand the most deserve some extra perks as a "thank you" for their loyalty. Because Supporters are active members of your community, they should have access to the perks that align with their interests. And by treating them as such, you can put these shoppers on the fast track to becoming an Insider.

How? Customer segmentation allows you to target your most loyal customers

with messaging and products that match their specific needs, giving you the opportunity to treat them like a true VIP.

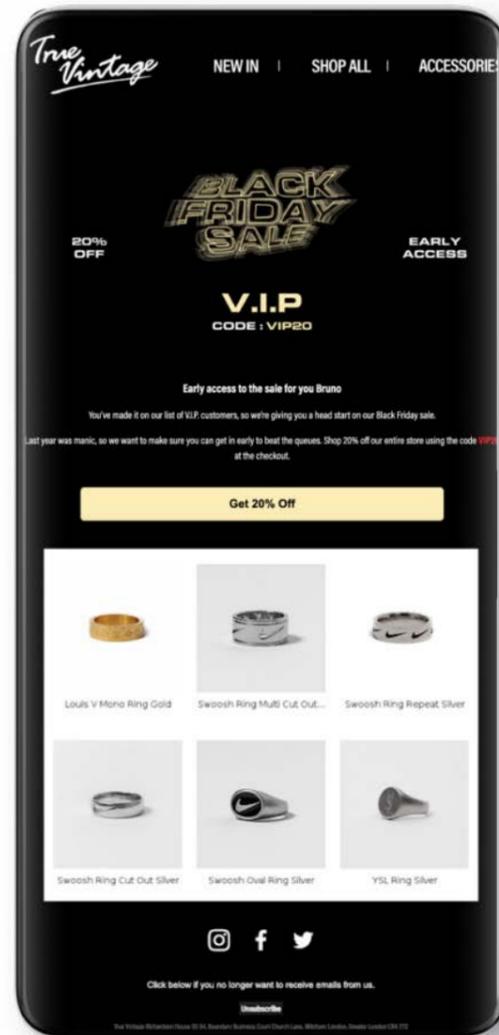
During Cyber Weekend, [True Vintage](#) created an experience that catered to the shoppers who were most likely to convert and drive higher AOV (without creating massive discounts for everyone).

To promote their sale, their most purchase-savvy customers were added to a VIP segment. Then, using a specific UTM link leading back to their site, True Vintage launched an email campaign that gave these shoppers (and only these shoppers) early access to their Cyber Weekend sale. This strategy

contributed to a 156% increase in conversion rate and 15% higher AOV for the brand.

If you want to differentiate the experiences offered to a Supporter and an Insider, offer the latter even more perks for their loyalty across other channels and through multiple campaigns.

Nevertheless, adding a layer of segmentation into your strategy ensures that you target each persona effectively and through multiple campaigns.



Nevertheless, adding a layer of segmentation into your strategy ensures that you target each persona effectively.

About Nosto

Nosto powers perfectly merchandised and personalized shopping experiences at every touchpoint, across every device. As the world's leading Commerce Experience Platform designed for ease of use, Nosto enables retailers to build, launch and optimize 1:1 shopping experiences without the need for dedicated IT resources or a lengthy implementation process. With experience deliverability capabilities such as product recommendations, content personalization, category merchandising, and more, Nosto helps brands build world-leading experiences unlike any other. Leading commerce brands in over 100 countries use Nosto to grow their business and delight their customers.



Author
James White,
General Manager UK & Ireland



Building a customer community through exceptional customer service

90% of Americans use customer support to determine whether to do business with a company. To build a thriving customer community, your team needs to be equipped with the right customer experience tools.

Below we'll look at the three ways to build a customer community using a help-desk so that you can consistently, efficiently, and personally meet your customers where they are.

01. Have consistent communication across channels

As your customer community grows, it's likely that your customers are interacting with you across various channels. Tracking how your Supporters and Insiders are engaging with your brand and ensuring you're there if they have any questions or concerns will help you retain and grow a healthy community.

Whether your community is communicating with you through social media, SMS, email, live chat or phone, it's important that you respond to customers and your community quickly and with the right information. That's where an omnichannel helpdesk helps, as you can centralize your customer tickets in one place. For example, if a customer interacts with you on Instagram and via email, you can easily see that from the Gorgias dashboard and merge the tickets so that their customer service experience is cohesive and doesn't utilize more than one customer service agent's time.

02. Know your customer data

Making your customer's experience seamless and knowing their history with your brand will go a long way in helping them feel like they're part of

the family. Needlessly adding extra steps such as asking them for their order number can add extra work for the customer, and your success team.

Make the most of your helpdesk provider's integrations with Shopify, Magento, and top ecommerce apps so you can easily see the full picture of your customer as you respond to them across channels, including their order history. For example, with Gorgias you can then modify, cancel, or refund an order without having to switch back and forth between your helpdesk and ecommerce platform. You can also integrate a loyalty program alongside your helpdesk to quickly see a customer's loyalty points and adjust your response depending on if they're a Drifter, Lurker, Supporter, or Insider.

Knowing your customer data also helps you adjust your responses so your community knows you care about their experience. You can use macros in Gorgias – prepared response templates that automatically pull in customer data from your store, including first name, order number, tracking status, etc. – so your responses are automatically personalized. This can leave a lasting positive impression on your community, especially with new Drifters or Lurkers who need more convincing.

Jessica  These shoes look amazing, do you have them in store?

Michelle  I'm not sure about the size, can you advise me?

Jim 

Maggie  Can you update my shipping address please?

Mariane  Hi! Do you know where my order is?

Gorgias bot 

Revenue + \$49.99

Time: 4min35

03. Don't make your community wait

A big factor in excellent customer service is first response and resolution time. The quicker you respond and resolve your customers questions, the better their experience is (making them much more likely to engage in your customer community).

Almost half of customer inquiries are around one question... "where's my order?". Building a strong customer community takes time. Your team's time is better spent engaging with potential customers and growing their relationship with your brand, not responding to simple questions that can be solved with a tracking number.

With Gorgias you can automate up to 30% of your most commonly asked questions using machine learning. You can set rules so that if a customer is simply asking where their order is, they will receive an automatic (but still personalized) response right away, giving them the information they need, and resolving the ticket. This frees up time for your team to focus on building relationships with Drifters and Lurkers, and surprising and delighting Supporters and Insiders with personalized discount codes.

Sign up here to trial [Gorgias for a month](#) and get the tools you need to show up for customers and turn Drifters into Insiders

Building a strong customer community takes time. Your team's time is best spent engaging with potential customers and growing their relationship with your brand.

About Gorgias

[Gorgias](#) is a helpdesk for Shopify, Magento and BigCommerce merchants to manage all of their customer communication & tickets in one platform (email, social media, SMS). It's powered with machine learning to automate up to 25% of commonly-asked-questions and seamlessly integrates into your existing tech stack to deliver better customer experiences.



Author
Chris Lavoie,
Tech Partner Manager

Justuno

How on-site messaging can help build ecommerce communities

A brand community is one of the most effective ways to build a relationship with your customers outside of your products. But it can be hard to engage with some shoppers who tend to be Lurkers or Drifters.

Want to know how you can turn those low effort and value shoppers into valuable Insiders? On-site experience and personalization! Let's talk about what that could look like for different personas and how pop-ups can help engage and invigorate these customers.

Use pop-ups to learn more about low effort buyers

Low-effort buyers are your Drifters and Lurkers, while these segments are both repeat customers they're either not engaged at all beyond the purchase, or are passive members of your brand community. These two groups can be engaged using on-site pop-ups to collect more information and spur desired actions. Some example strategies include:

- Quizzes to collect more information to tailor future messaging
- Feedback forms to collect information about product suggestions, pain points, etc.
- Improved lead captures to incentivize account creation or newsletter signup

The more information you can collect on Drifters and Lurkers the more personalized and effective you can make your marketing campaigns. These two personas will respond positively to personalization as they'll see more value come from engaging with your brand than they did before.

Another tactic to boost effort from these personas is to use offers that require participation. Use giveaways as your incentive for filling out the pop-ups and giving you the information you're looking for. Not only will one larger giveaway likely cost you less in the end

than lots of smaller prizes, but it's also likely to encourage more participation by being something customers actually want to win, think 3-night resort stay vs a coffee mug.

Create VIP experiences with pop-ups for top customers

The best kind of customers for a brand's community are their Insiders. These community members actively engage with the company and other members, publicly advocate for you, and make content on your behalf. A slightly less active but still very valuable member is the Supporter, this is a customer who engages but it requires effort on your part to keep them there. These two personas of top customers are who you're looking to fill your brand community with. Continue delighting these strong community members with some of these strategies for even more success:

- Banners reminding them of their VIP status once logged into their account
- Send them product feedback quizzes after purchasing
- Pop-ups showing the benefits they've unlocked by reaching a certain spending tier

The key here is to use pop-ups in a way to reinforce their special status, giving

them the red carpet treatment and letting them know! The best part about Supporters and Insiders is that they will tell you what's working and what's not, effectively helping you not only improve your brand but also your marketing!

Brand communities are so important for a successful business, they're a source of valuable information, inspiration, and UGC. Make sure you're investing the necessary time and resources into growing this channel for your brand, with on-site experiences matching their behaviors, and the perks as well as messaging to back it up!

Brand communities are so important for a successful business, they're a source of valuable information, inspiration, and UGC.

About Justuno

Justuno is a conversion platform for intelligent lead capture, recommendations, and personalized messaging. Justuno merchants, on average, see a 135% lift in revenue in the first year of using our solution. We support brands like Pura Vida, UNTUCKit, Volcom, Rothy's, and more and integrate with more than 95 other top ecommerce technologies. Justuno is also a Shopify Plus Certified app and a Shopify partner since 2017.



Author
Michael Wadsworth,
Partner Marketing
Associate



ReCharge your advocates with subscriptions

So you've got your product, your website ready to go, and production up and running. Now what? It's time to build a community to create a growing and engaged customer base that keeps coming back. Why is this important?

Thomas McCutchen Founder and CEO of Scoutside [said it best](#):

“The most important piece to building a brand is having a voice – a point of view. Make sure visitors feel – not just read – this voice and point of view. Think of your brand as a language. You want your customers speaking this language through all touchpoints of the brand through mechanisms such as identity, color, and type hierarchy.”

- Thomas McCutchen, Founder and CEO of Scoutside

[ReCharge](#) helps merchants build their brand and their culture wherever their customers are on the community persona matrix. You can grow your recurring revenue through subscriptions, increasing engagement, and average customer value (ACV).

In our [State of Subscription Commerce Report](#), we found that in 2020 merchants with a subscription function saw their subscriber base grow by 91%, and average order value (AOV) was up across the majority of verticals. Not all subscribers are equal, their personas are as different as their subscription offering and shipping cadence customizations. Here's how to use subscriptions to engage each of the consumer personas in your community.

Let's start with the Drifters. We've all done it. I'm the first to admit that I'm guilty of this behavior. I buy something online, checkout as a guest, and never come back. But what if I was offered an incentive to try a subscription? By allowing customization on shipping cadence, products offered, and providing the opportunity to curate boxes, a merchant is more likely to attract those guest checkout bandits and get them to come back.

For Lurkers, who may have created accounts, read marketing emails, but then delete them quickly, try product incentives and discounts. Build brand loyalty by seducing Lurkers and giving them

what they're looking for: discounts and the occasional free gift. What better way to transform a Lurker into Supporter status than by proving there's value in reading your emails.

Once a customer becomes a Supporter, you've got an engaged community member. High-five. They're sharing content and renewing their subscriptions, but now there's the challenge to keep your Supporters continuously engaged.

Merchants with a subscription function saw their subscriber base grow by 91% in 2020

Black Rifle Coffee Company (BRCC) is an example of a merchant who uses ReCharge and LoyaltyLion to create a membership program that [does just this](#). Integrating LoyaltyLion directly into the Customer Portal puts an emphasis on retention by reminding customers to redeem their rewards before their upcoming subscription. For BRCC, this adds value by nudging customers to redeem their hard-earned points while also minimizing shipping costs and rolling their free gifts into existing subscription shipments. This model helps merchants identify key customers who engage with their brand, the Insiders.

Insiders not only subscribe to your membership program, they champion it. They tell their friends to join and they're excited to hear what's new from your brand. Keeping customers at this level of engagement can be a challenge, but it's achievable through things like VIP perks, adding a gift to their subscription, or credit towards adding more products to their existing ones. Wherever your customers are on the spectrum of community engagement, ReCharge helps to quickly enable subscription and recurring revenue models.

Wherever your customers are on the spectrum of community engagement, ReCharge helps to quickly enable subscription and recurring revenue models.

About ReCharge

[ReCharge](#) is the leading provider of subscription management software for ecommerce. Since 2014, merchants of all sizes have used ReCharge's billing and payment management solutions to grow their business by increasing customer lifetime value and reducing customer churn. Today, ReCharge powers subscriptions for nearly 20 million subscribers across 15,000 merchants, including fast-growing brands such as Billie, LOLA, and Hubble. While it is based in Santa Monica, CA, the remote-first company is distributed across ten countries around the world.



Author
Leya Leydiker,
Director of Technology
Partnerships



3 ways to optimize your fulfillment strategy to build a brand community

When you deliver a consistent unboxing experience, customers are more likely to stay loyal, share your brand with their social network, and become brand Insiders.

Creating a winning fulfillment strategy plays a huge role in creating an engaged brand community. Here are the three most common ways to optimize your fulfillment strategy to influence customer loyalty.

01. Invest in custom branded packaging

Did you know that [40% of online shoppers](#) would share an image of their purchase on social media if it came in branded packaging?

Investing in custom branded packaging allows you to maintain brand recognition throughout the entire customer journey – while making your Insiders feel special. Custom-printed boxes that appeal to your customer base can enhance brand awareness and leave a lasting impression on your customers.

If you outsource shipping, make sure to choose an [ecommerce fulfillment](#) provider like ShipBob that allows you to use custom boxes, mailers, and inserts, so you maintain control over the unboxing experience.

02. Use shipping incentives as a marketing tool

Promoting fast and affordable two-day shipping or other incentives like free shipping are great ways to build buzz around your brand, build a loyal following and make your community feel special. Here are a few simple ways you can use shipping incentives as a marketing tool:

- Run digital ads to promote free shipping
- Add a banner with shipping promotions to your website (“Free shipping” information is the only one that’s found to consistently [perform over time](#))
- Post on social media platforms
- Promote free shipping to build a customer email list

To offset the costs of free shipping, you can increase your average order value (AOV) by offering bundles, upsells, or a minimum spend threshold in exchange for free shipping.

03. Build trust by meeting customer expectations

By building trust, you’re able to transform the Drifters into Supporters and Insiders who love engaging with your brand. If you offer customers fast and affordable shipping, your fulfillment strategy must live up to what you promise.

One of the best ways to reduce shipping costs and lower transit times is to work with a fulfillment provider that allows you to [split your inventory](#) across locations. Instead of having to ship all orders from one central location, you save time and money by shipping from the fulfillment center closest to your customer.

Lastly, don't forget about your returns process and policy. [66% of shoppers](#) review a retailer's returns policy before buying. Make sure that there are no hidden fees associated with returns, and make it clear whether or not customers will be responsible for return shipping costs.

A great first impression and consistency in delivery are what turns a one-time shopper into an engaged brand Insider — and your fulfillment strategy plays a significant role.

When you outsource fulfillment to a 3PL like ShipBob, you can easily implement these fulfillment best practices to build a supportive and engaged brand community without spending more of your time on logistics.

A great first impression and consistency in delivery are what turns a one-time shopper into an engaged brand Insider — and your fulfillment strategy plays a significant role.

About ShipBob

[ShipBob](#) is a global logistics platform that fulfills ecommerce orders for direct-to-consumer brands. Our mission is to make you more successful online by providing best-in-class fulfillment so your customers get the fast and affordable shipping they expect.

With reliable fulfillment services, warehouses near your customers, and connected technology that powers our fulfillment network, we help improve transit times, shipping costs, and the delivery experience for your customers.



Author
Kristina Lopienski,
Director of Content
Marketing

Q&A with Tiffany La, Social Media Marketing Coordinator at Glamnetic

We cozied on up with community royalty – the lash brand, Glamnetic – and asked their Social Media Marketing Coordinator all about the ins and outs of their “Glam Fam”.

CommunityMatters



Q Why is community important for Glamnetic?

A “Our Glamnetic family is so important to our business because of their immense support and brand loyalty. We look to our online Facebook community – the Glam Fam – to learn how we can improve our products and to create new ones they want to see. Members of the Glam Fam engage the most with our new product releases and help with our company-wide success – all because of their constant feedback and suggestions.”

Q What does a successful community look like for Glamnetic?

A “One that’s highly engaged and loyal to Glamnetic. This can be varied – as there isn’t one finite way to success. For us, we want our community to be able to provide us with their honest feedback, opinions as well as likes and dislikes.

Beyond the products we sell, we also want to make the lives of our customers easier by cutting down their makeup routine time and by making them feel and look their best. If our community is able to connect with us on this personal level, we know we’ve been successful!”

“We attribute Glamnetic’s success to our community members’ loyalty to our brand and we couldn’t thank them enough!”



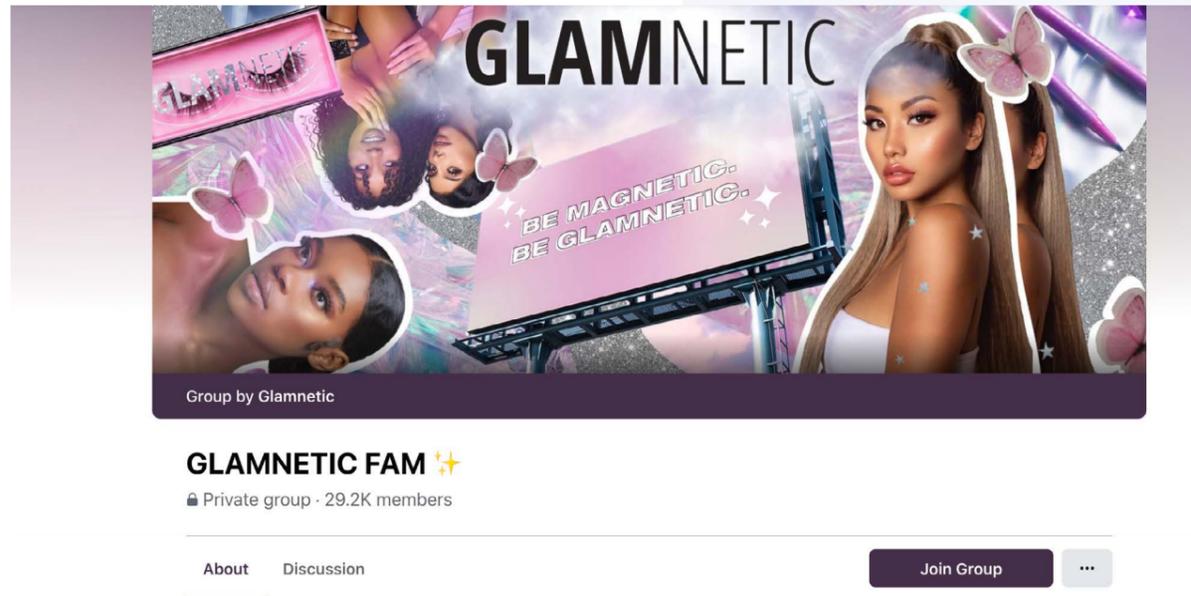
Q How does your community work and what does it look like?

A “Our community lives on social media. This includes Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tik Tok, and Pinterest. But, our Facebook community is where our most engaged and vocal customers are.

On Facebook, we post between five and six times a week. These can range from directly asking our community for product feedback, fun weekly make-up challenges or product tips and tricks. Our members love posting their collection hauls, makeup looks, and questions.”

“It’s an incredibly positive and uplifting community. It truly feels like a family”





Q What do you do to encourage customers to become members of your Glam Fam?

A “To get people to join in, we use social media to promote the page and let customers know it’s there.

Our CEO also goes on our Instagram Stories and promotes our community page alongside more general company updates. We also have consistent messaging about the community in emails and when we reach out to customers by SMS.”

“We love to promote the inclusivity and positivity of our community. It’s a place for anyone to join!”

Q What’s your top piece of advice for anyone looking to build a customer community like yours?

A “We fully stand behind building a customer community. It’s the best way to understand your customers. You get to know what they want, what they like (and dislike). Because our community is purchasing and engaging with us, they’re vital to our success.”

“Our top piece of advice is to always listen to your existing shoppers when building your community.”



Author
Tiffany La,
Social Media Marketing
Coordinator at Glamnetic

GLAMNETIC

Get the look: Community inspo from leading brands

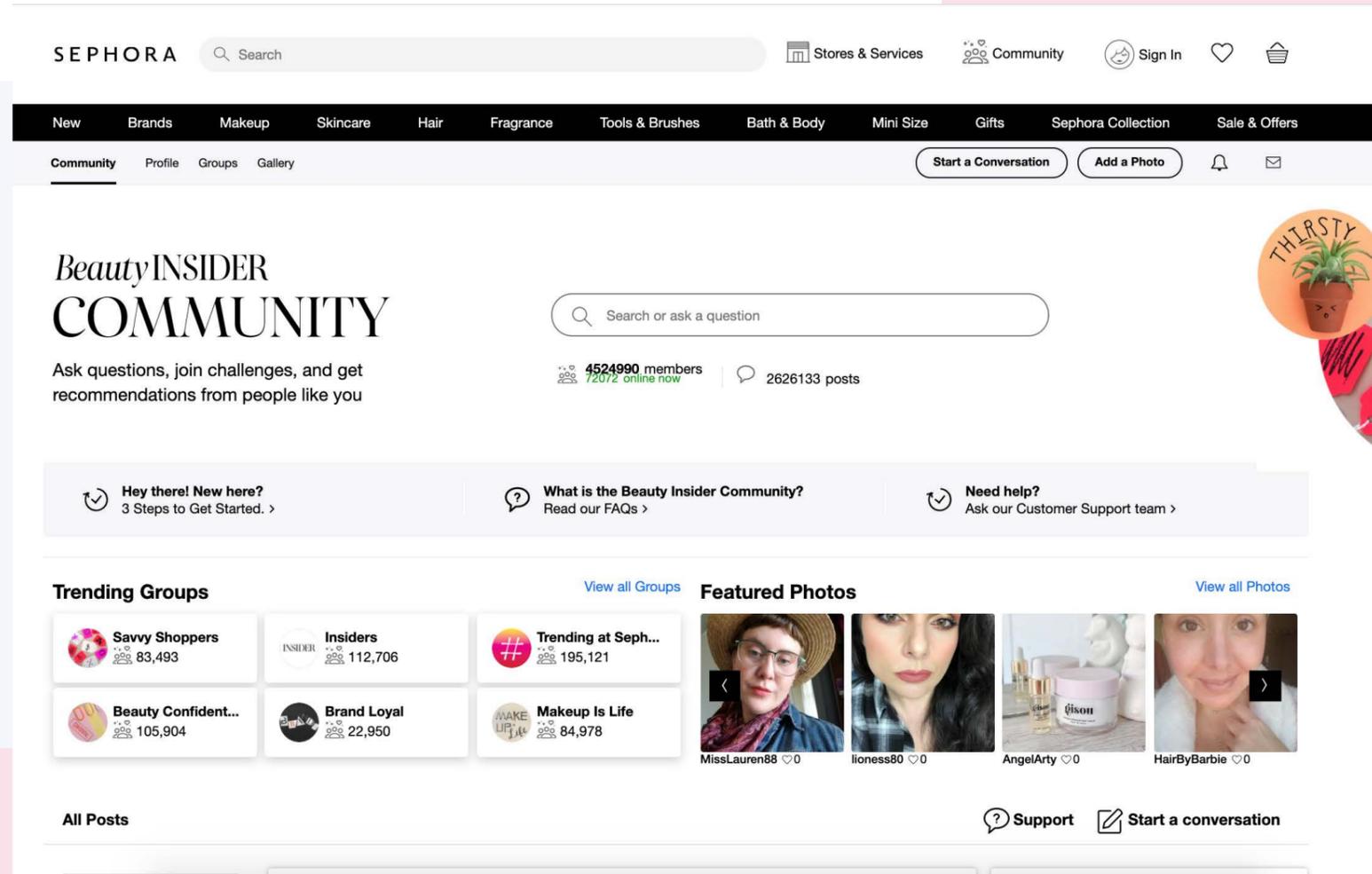
Go from clueless about community
to community champion with these
inspiring examples from leading brands.

CommunityMatters



Sephora's Beauty Insider Community

Calling all super fans. [Sephora's Beauty Insider Community](#) (BIC) is a thriving hub for those most engaged. Here, beauty experts and newbies alike ask questions and chat directly to brands and their founders – including the founder of Nars, François Nars.



The BIC also gets [VIP, first-look access](#) to new product drops and sales events. Remind us again, how much shopping is too much shopping? Customers can also join groups and chat about their favorite topics (such as clean skincare).

LIVELY

The lingerie brand, LIVELY, shines a light on their community with a clear and easy-to-navigate community section on their website. Members become LIVELY ambassadors with the chance to take part in the [#GivingLIVELY philanthropy movement](#). Lingerie and philanthropy sound like a winning combo to us.



LIVELY also helps its members glow up by running [at-home events](#) like fitness and yoga classes. If you don't fancy rolling out your yoga mat, there's a [LIVELY podcast](#) too (interviewing successful women like Bobbi Brown and Erinn Hayes). The podcast represents the badass vision of women the LIVELY community embodies.



#livingLIVELY At Home with @PineappleInTheBigApple: Cooking Sesh
 We're #livingLIVELY at home with Ambassador MJ of @pineappleinthebigapple! Turn in to learn a surprise new recipe....
 Sunday, March 22nd
 6:00 PM EST

WATCH NOW



#livingLIVELY At Home with @WellnessWithMolly
 Time to breathe & take a break, crew. Join Ambassador @wellnesswithmolly for a lunchtime 30-min slow flow yoga and 15-min meditation!
 Wednesday, March 25th
 12:00 PM EST

WATCH NOW

Get the look: Community inspo from leading brands



JOIN THE CREW, SHARE THE LOVE

Become a LIVELY ambassador and join this movement of wild hearts and boss brains! This means being a part of a community of smart, strong women doing the things they love with the people that they love. It means sharing in #GivingLIVELY philanthropy moments to pay it forward within your community and the world. It means growing your own social presence, getting first access to all our launches, and being in the know before everyone else. To apply, fill out a few quick questions and you'll be on your way!

They give their community members double-point events through their [loyalty program](#) and top-tier loyalty members get even more perks like having a say on upcoming styles or invites to exclusive events.

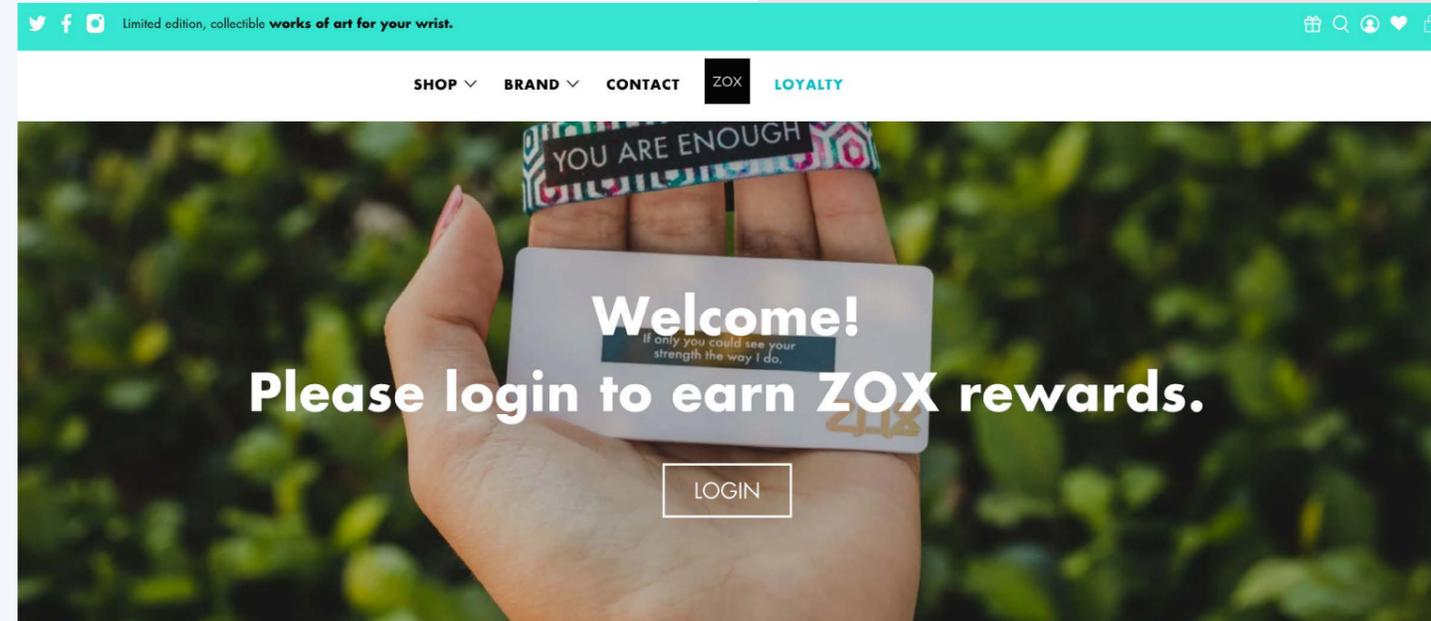
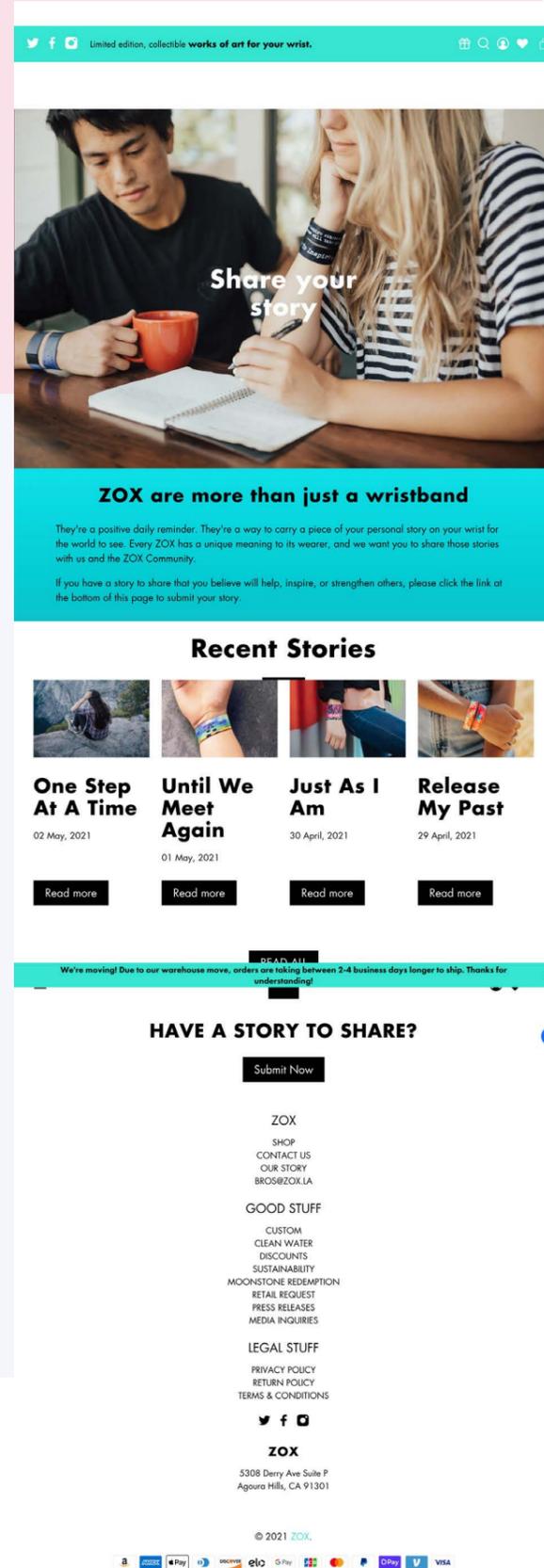
BRB, becoming a member now.

What's Your Status?

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
BESTIE STATUS \$0! Free to join! Woot Woot!			
TOTAL BOSS STATUS \$115 Annual Spend!			
POWERHOUSE STATUS \$325 Annual Spend!			
Status Perks			
EARN! Points per \$1 Spent	1	2	3
Annual Spend*	\$0	\$115	\$325
Use Points toward LIVELY faves	●	●	●
Birthday Gift (points)	●	●	●
Personal In-Store Fit Session	●	●	●
Vote on Upcoming Styles	●	●	●
Early Access to New Styles		●	●
Exclusive Events			●

Zox

Zox, a company producing affirmation wristbands, is all about community and the unique [stories](#) their customers share. Customers submit their stories to Zox, sharing the challenges they're facing to help inspire and uplift others in the community. Zox then shares these stories as highlights in their email marketing. Get ready for your spotlight.



Their [members-only blog](#) showers community members with perks like behind-the-scenes access to the running of the brand, exclusive Zoom hangouts, art classes, early premieres of what's coming up next and "super drops" (including exclusive colorways and clothing). [Loyalty program](#) members also get points for purchases they trade in for discounts.



Lego Ideas

A community space for Lego enthusiasts, [Lego Ideas](#) is a space to share creations, enter prize competitions, showcase proposals for new sets and vote on other models dreamed up by other fan designers – the most popular ideas even go to market! Lego Ideas also gives data to the brand and keeps fans interested with ongoing contests.

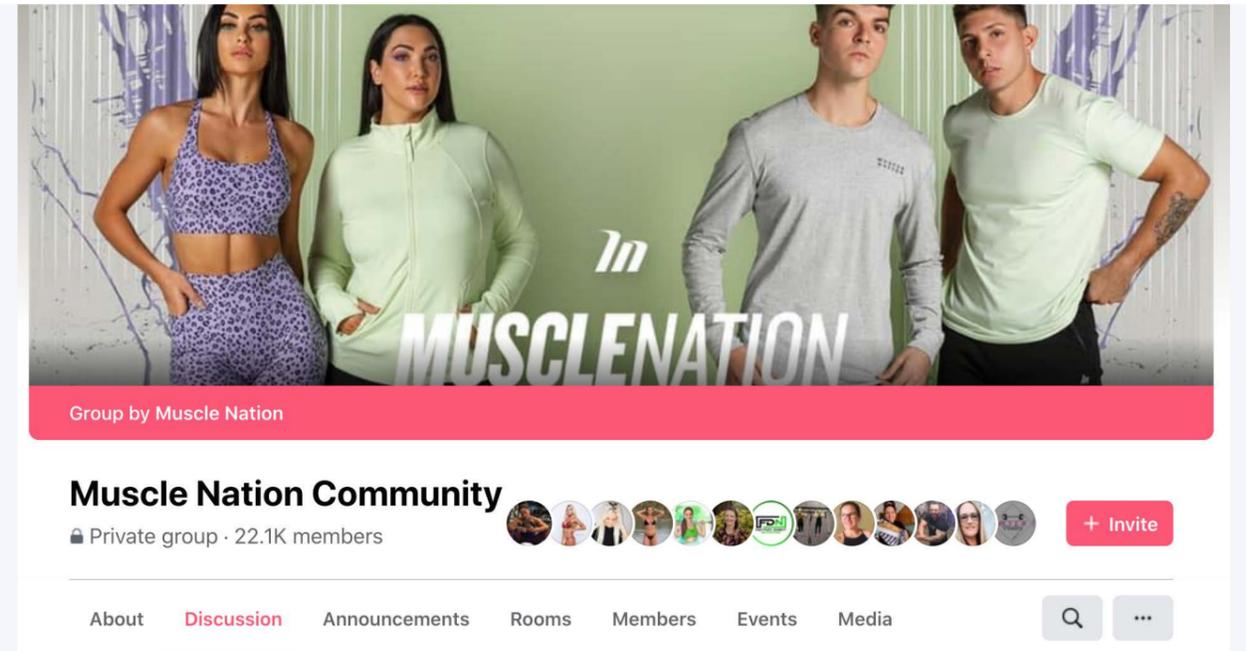


The screenshot shows the LEGO IDEAS website layout. At the top is a black navigation bar with the LEGO IDEAS logo, menu items for EXPLORE, BLOG, and HOW IT WORKS, a search bar with the text 'Find ideas', and a LOG IN button. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is divided into several sections:

- Left Column:** A vertical list of idea cards. The top card is 'WINNIE THE POOH' by 'benlouisa', featuring a LEGO model of a tree and a house. Below it is 'MEDIEVAL BLACKSMITH' by 'Namirob', featuring a LEGO model of a medieval blacksmith's workshop. A third card is partially visible at the bottom.
- Center:** A large contest banner for 'DESIGN A FIRST LEGO LEAGUE ROBOT MISSION MODEL!' with 'ENTER' and 'VIEW DETAILS' buttons.
- Right Column:** A vertical stack of four promotional buttons: 'SUBMIT IDEA' (Become a LEGO designer), 'CONTESTS' (Win cool prizes), 'ACTIVITY' (Share your creativity), and 'IN THE SHOP' (Ideas that made it). At the bottom right is a yellow button for 'SUBSCRIBE TO LEGO® IDEAS EMAILS' with a small LEGO model image.

Muscle Nation

Gym apparel brand, Muscle Nation, puts community at the heart of its brand, running initiatives to [give back to the community](#). They've donated to a range of charities including Children's Hospital, Australian Bushfire Appeal and Wires, among others. Motivation to lift weights has never been higher.



COMMUNITY & DONATIONS



Giving back to the community is important to us at Muscle Nation.

Since our beginnings, we have been dedicated to contribute, participate and donate to our community wherever we can. Our vision for 2021 is to engage even further with our community, and strengthen our community involvement. We are committed to change and making Muscle Nation a community that is inclusive, supportive and empowering. To read our story, [click here](#).

[MN Rewards](#)

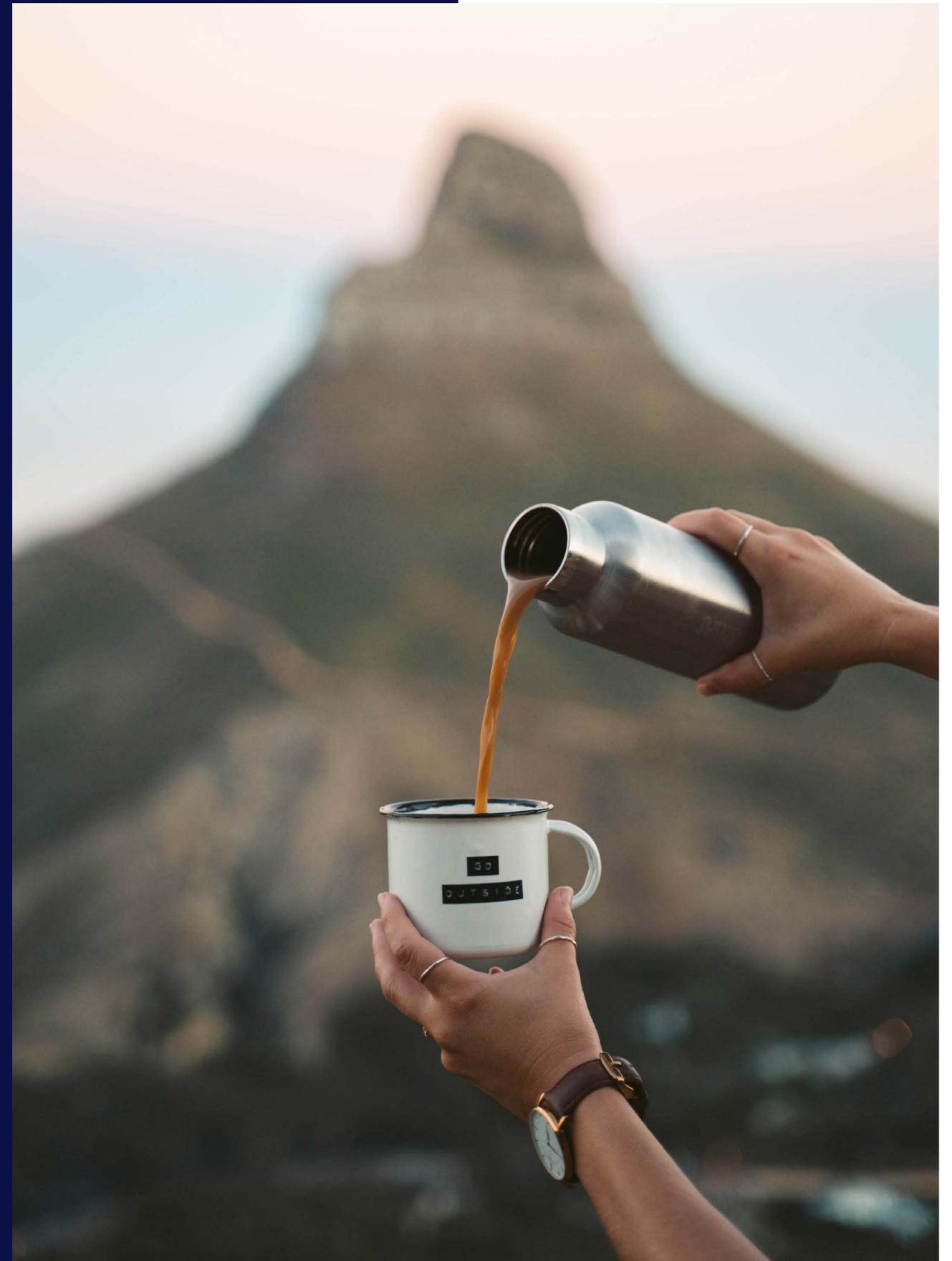
Muscle Nation also has a [private Facebook group](#) for members to connect, chat and ask questions. The brand rewards customers with loyalty points for following them on social media. Their staggered [loyalty program tiers](#) give members a better VIP treatment as they move up.



<p>LEVEL 3</p> <p>★★★</p> <p>SILVER</p> <p>At this level you're officially crushing it and you'll be enjoying some insanely cool VIP treatment.</p> <p>Entry criteria: \$1,500 spent. Earning rate: 7 points per \$1 spent</p>	<p>LEVEL 4</p> <p>★★★★</p> <p>GOLD</p> <p>This is where you tick off a massive bucket list item and officially attain elite status! At this level you'll also unlock some seriously awesome and exclusive MN perks!</p> <p>Entry criteria: \$3,000+ spent. Earning rate: 8 points per \$1 spent</p>
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Closing thoughts from LoyaltyLion

CommunityMatters



So there's the inside story on why community matters.

If you used to eye-roll about the impact and importance of “community”, we hope we've pulled back the curtain on a few things.

Turns out that the community most brands think they've got is actually just a customer base. A community, on the other hand, is much more fascinating than that.

The Community Matrix, mapped out the four Community Personas that exist – Drifters, Lurkers, Supporters, and Insiders. It showed how each needs differing levels of marketing effort to keep their relationship with your brand sweet.

We learned that across the board, consumers want three key things for their commitment to your community:

1. Transactional benefits
2. Experiential perks
3. Brand alignment

Give them all this and in return they'll complete the high-value, community-

based actions that will add incremental value to your brand over time.

You'll have a brand community that attracts and converts new shoppers, delivers exclusive experiences that drive up the lifetime value of your existing customers and offers you an open and honest source of customer feedback.

Hey presto: an ROI-positive community buzzing with Insiders.

To bring all of this theory to life, we joined forces with ecommerce experts to show how “community” has the power to bring all your marketing together to deliver a strong, ROI-driven outcome. We saw how your tools and channels can be used to engage each Community Persona and get them to complete more community-building activities.

To top it all off, we celebrated a selection of community champs. And, told stories of just some of the brands who are out there bringing their customers together.

We hope you've learned everything you need to know about the ins and outs of customer communities, why they matter, and how to build your own.

Convinced that community matters to your business?

[Talk to a member of the LoyaltyLion team.](#) We'll help you build a community that drives long-term revenue and even longer-lasting relationships.



About us

[LoyaltyLion](#) helps fast-growth ecommerce merchants turn unengaged customer bases into active communities that power longer-lasting relationships and sustainable growth. Use loyalty data and insights to connect and accelerate your marketing efforts towards one meaningful, ROI-driven outcome - a community of highly engaged, highly valuable customers.

“Use loyalty data and insights to connect”

