

The 7 Things You Need to Launch a Community in 7 Days

You want to create a customer community but you're not sure where to start? [Start here.](#)

Online communities offer invaluable benefits to B2B companies and their customers. With a dedicated space for digital connection, your customers can build relationships with each other, share best practices, and solve problems, while your company uncovers customer insights, improves the customer experience, and earns loyalty.



Maybe you know all the benefits already, but you're just not sure where to start. If this sounds like you, that's where this checklist can help.

Launching an online customer community doesn't have to be a cumbersome process. Find out the seven things you need to launch a community fast.

1. Branding Basics

You want your online community to look and feel like your company. When customers login, they should immediately know that this is an extension of your brand. With Higher Logic, it doesn't take much to create that feeling – just add your logo and your color scheme. Want to level up? Design a new logo variation specifically for your online community.

2. Community Name

Like branding, your community should be recognizable for people. Giving it a name will help it feel like a real destination. You can go from as straightforward as you want to as creative as you want. For example, Higher Logic's customer community is called HUG – the Higher Logic Users Group. Zenoss, a SaaS solution for IT monitoring, calls their online community "TechZen." When time is limited, lean toward something straightforward or something around connection (e.g. "The Hub" or "[Your Company Name] Connect.")

3. Community Content

Online community engagement is fueled by content. What do we mean by "content" in a community context? Topics for a discussion thread, blog posts within the community, community events, resources in the library, an Ask the Expert session – these are all examples of online community content. Before you launch, you'll want to plan the top content items you'll use to generate buzz and engagement in your community. Try starting with at least four. Here are some ideas:

- **Community discussion threads:**
 - + Ask customers to share their top product hack
 - + Have customers introduce themselves and answer two ice breaker questions
- **Poll** asking what topics customers would like to see in an Ask the Expert session
- **Video** from leadership explaining why your company has launched a customer community

4. Launch Plan

Consider a phased launch for your community. This involves rolling out slowly to a small group of early testers (which could be composed of staff and customers), and then launching to the full customer base when beta testing is done. Plus, when you launch with a small group first, you build advocates for your community, which can help boost buy-in and awareness down the road.

Your beta testers can help you:

- Work out any technical issues
- Seed the community with interesting content
- Promote the community on their own social media profiles

For in-depth advice, read our guide to launching an online community. →

5. KPIs

Before you launch your online community, you'll want to set goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) so that you can measure your results – for both engagement metrics and business metrics.

- **Engagement Metrics:** What kind of engagement do you want to see and what tactics will you use to get there? With a Higher Logic Community, you get a letter grade and tips to improve your engagement through the Engagement Benchmark Score.
- **Business Metrics:** Map community activities back to the business. For example, do you want to gain new advocates? Measure how many advocates you're starting with and compare again in a year.

6. CRM Integration

A community integration with your Customer Relationship Management software makes data management and community personalization so much easier. You have a single source of truth for data management, enabling you to act on the full view of the customer, not just a small section of the data. Use this data to start customers off on the right foot by prepopulating their profile and making sure they join the right communities. Get ready for it by preparing any integration documentation you'll need before launch.

7. Moderation Plan

All communities need some element of moderation. This is to prevent users from doing something that could damage your community culture, like using offensive language or promoting their own product or publication. To start strong, [create a community code of conduct](#). This allows you to back up your decisions down the road. You can't anticipate everything and you'll likely have to update the code of conduct as you go, but it's essential to have one at the start.

Bonus: A Perfect-Fit Community Platform

Find the answer in Higher Logic Community. Over the last 12 years, we've launched more than 1,000 communities at Higher Logic, and we know how to make them thrive. [Want to learn more?](#)

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