

How to Build a Community That Establishes You as An Expert and Generates a Lot of Traffic

Throughout these issues, you've been learning that one key to your success is to establish yourself as an expert or authority in the niche. That's because people want to follow and learn from known experts, rather than the Joe Blows of the web. Indeed, that's why you want to always publish quality content in each email you send to help you build up your authority and expertise in the niche.

But here's the thing...

This sort of brand-building doesn't stop with your newsletter. In order to firmly establish yourself as an expert, you need to think outside the newsletter. And one really good way to establish your expertise while also generating traffic is to create your own niche group or forum.

Let's talk about how to do it...

Step 1: Decide Which Platform to Use

For the purpose of this lesson, we're going to focus on groups or forums. Yes, owning a blog is also a good way to build a community, but that tends to be more one-sided (since visitors or members can't start topics, as they can only reply to your posts).

The advantage of a forum is that you own the platform. You're not going to lose your platform because someone else changed the rules. (Provided you follow your webhosting rules, of course.) The disadvantage is that a forum requires users to create a log in and remember to visit.

The advantage of creating a Facebook group is that people are already used to visiting the platform – often multiple times per day. They don't need a new login, and your posts will show up in their regular feed to remind them to participate in the group.

The downside of Facebook, of course, is that you don't own the platform. Facebook could change the rules and you could lose your group.

Nonetheless, generally Facebook is a great way to start a community, because you can get up and running fast (no tech experience required). Be sure to pick a name that reflects the topic, preferably with keywords that your audience is likely to search for. That way, anyone searching for the topic will see your group in the list.

For example, let's suppose your brand name is Whiz Bang, and you're setting up a dieting group. You don't want to call it the "Whiz Bang Group," because only people who are already familiar with your brand will recognize it. Instead, you can incorporate your brand and the relevant keywords, such as "The Whiz Bang Weight Loss for Women" group.

Step 2: Determine Your Topic

The next step is to determine your exact topic. It's a good idea to do some research to see what other groups and forums are in your niche and which topics they're focusing on. In order to set yourself apart, it's a good idea to specialize in a topic or targeted niche that others aren't focusing on.

For example, perhaps you want to start a weight loss group. Consider this: Is anyone else focusing on your specific niche, such as weight-loss for middle age women or dieting for those with special dietary needs (such as gluten-free dieting)? Or how about a narrower topic, such as creating easy, delicious meals?

Focus in on a smaller segment of your market or a specialized topic, and then move onto the next step...

Step 3: Disseminate Content

Once you pick your topic and platform, then you want to start building up the platform with some good content. You may want to bring on a few friends or send out invites to a select number of your audience to help you build up content in the group before you initially launch. People are more

likely to want to join a group if it already looks like there is good content on board and an active membership.

Step 4: Drive Traffic to the Platform

Once you have some content on the platform, then you can start developing a bigger audience. Here's how to attract people to your new group...

Tell Your Existing Contacts

Blog about your new group, tell your newsletter list, and announce it across all your social media pages.

Start a Contest

The idea here is to offer contest entries to join your group as well as to spread the word about the group.

Drop Links and CTAs

Another way to promote is to put a link and call to action all throughout your website and sales funnel. This includes:

- Links in all emails you send out.
- Permanent links in your blog's sidebar.
- Links in your blogging and guest blogging bylines.
- Links on your thank you and download pages.
- Links inside your products, including lead magnets and paid products.
- Mentions during your webinars.

Next...

Use Facebook Advertising

Facebook's ad platform is a convenient way to promote a FB group. Just be sure to pick a narrowly targeted audience in order to get high conversion rates.

Ask Your Partners to Promote

If you have joint venture partners, ask them to do a co-promotion where they promote your new group and you promote the link of their choice.

Step 5: Develop a Plan

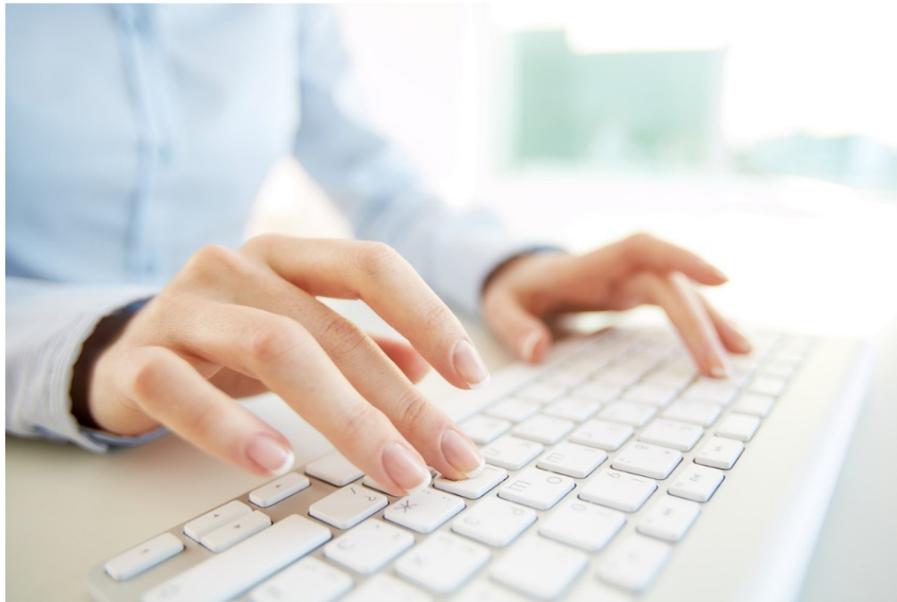
The above steps will get your group up and running. Now you need to create a long-term plan for both sharing content and building the group. This includes:

- Creating regular features to make your group more “sticky.” For example, you might do group-coaching sessions one day per week or an hour or two, where members can ask you anything.
- Develop a plan for member retention. For example, you might showcase your best members (e.g., “Member of the Week”) to build loyalty.
- Encourage participation. People who contribute regularly are likely to quit the group. For example, you might ask members to share their favorite tips, tools, authors, embarrassing mistakes, pics or more – whatever you think will engage them.
- Post high-quality content. This should include strategies and tips people can’t find anywhere else, as your goal here is to help build your expertise and authority in the niche.
- Create a long-term traffic plan. You’ll need to promote your group and keep posting content in order to grow it. Eventually, once you hit a certain membership level people will seek you out – but until then, you need to find them and encourage them to join.
- Create a plan for driving traffic back to your site. For example, you might post “Part 1” of an article in the group, and then encourage people to join your list to get “Part 2” of the article.

Now a few parting thoughts...

Conclusion

Building your own community in the form of a group is a great way to share high-quality content, establish your expertise, and drive traffic back to your site. That's why you'll want to start doing research ASAP to see what sort of group you should set up.



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