

Online Community Growth Programs

Solutions for Growing and Serving Your Online Membership

The starting point of any successful online community has to be good content that is perceived to be of high value by the target community you seek to attract. But while the phrase "if you build it, they will come" may work for a field of dreams, it takes more than that to create a successful website or online community.

The focus of an ApexTwo *Online Community Growth Program* is to help you put in place the right strategy, website structure and promotion in order to build traffic and community around the valuable content you're already providing. Our programs typically address the following areas:

Organizational Clarity

To quote some "conversional" wisdom in online marketing, "clarity trumps persuasion" in most any situation. Stated alternatively, how can you persuade me to do something if I don't understand what it is you want me to do? As soon as a member or prospective member hits a page on your site, he/she needs to know immediately what to do next and why

Focus on Memberships

The outward measure of success for most associations, clubs or online communities is the answer to: "How many members do you have?" Whether you're a prospective advertiser, potential investor, or just thinking about joining, you want know, "How big is this group?"

Therefore, the first goal for your community site is to convert visitors into members. Most successful communities use a two-tier approach to membership with the first level being a free membership. However, where sites often fall short is they expect visitors to *sell themselves* on joining just by looking at the great content you're providing. However, your best opportunity to convert a visitor into a member comes at that very moment of anticipation when they are about to view that great content, not afterwards. Does that mean they're ready to fill out a form that asks them everything from their budget authority to shoe size? Of course not. You haven't earned their trust yet. But they will give you a name, their email and a chance to earn it.

Viral Enablement

This area is a list of small actions that collectively produce big results. Studies have shown that about 10% of your membership will have the desire to promote you to their friends and colleagues. However, most sites don't do enough to make that easy to do. There are both passive and proactive ways to accomplish this. Even something as simple as "forward to a friend" is often overlooked, sometimes because we think people don't do that. (Even though they really do...)

SEO Enablement

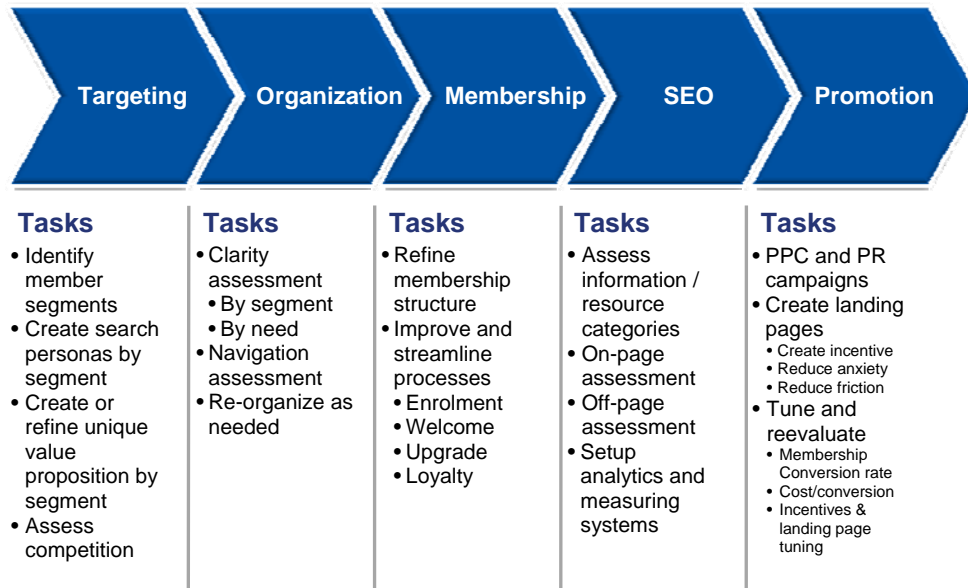
Here again small changes can add up to improved results. Perhaps you publish whitepapers on your site, that's great. But do you coach your authors on creating appropriately sized, appropriately keyworded abstracts that will improve your search rankings? And which do you think ranks better, an html page or a PDF document?

Interactivity and Web 2.0

So with all of the talk about building web 2.0 interactive communities, where does this play into ApexTwo's *Online Community Growth Programs*? Quite simply, it is just another new form of content. Content developed by members themselves. And in this case, the value of that content is even more directly related to the number of active members in the community. That value is also a function of the features and ease of use of those that facilitate interaction. But even in these Web 2.0 communities, all of the areas already mentioned play as strong, if not a stronger, role in growing the membership and value delivered.

Our Approach

ApexTwo's *Online Community Growth Programs* typically achieve success through the following five steps:



Obtain a Free Community Site Assessment

We'll take a look at your current membership offering and website and give you a 6-point assessment of what an ApexTwo *Online Community Growth Program* might do for you. Whether you choose to use our assistance or not, you'll some good tips to get started.

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