

# 20 Community

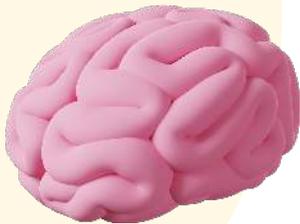
# 22 Industry Report



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## INTRODUCTION

# Executive Summary

## Welcome to the 4th annual Community Industry Report!

Since 2017, we've been conducting this research to better understand how the community industry is evolving, and how businesses are building community. This year's survey was the largest ever conducted in the community industry, with 778 community professionals participating.

### The report focuses on three overarching themes:

#### **01. The Community Professional**

How are roles, responsibilities, and team structures evolving?

#### **02. Community Programs and Engagement**

What programs are businesses investing in, which metrics do they track, and what do engagement benchmarks look like?

#### **03. The Business Value of Community**

To what extent are businesses able to measure the value of community and what is that value?

What we found is truly exciting. The community industry is maturing. Community is becoming a more prominent and independent department within organizations. Community teams are growing in size and becoming more specialized, with increased focus on functions like community operations, design, and events. And the overwhelming majority of companies report that they're increasing their investment in community in 2022.

That all said, community professionals still have some serious challenges ahead. Measuring and proving the value of community is a challenge that continues to plague community teams. While we're seeing the rise of new technology to support community operations, a lot of the work community teams do is manual and hard to scale. Despite investment growing, community teams still report being underfunded and lacking necessary headcount.

We also looked into macro trends this year like Web 3.0 and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in community programs.

And for the first time, we collected data on community salaries and community and event engagement benchmarks. These will both be made available in interactive dashboards on [cmxhub.com](https://cmxhub.com), where you can play with the data yourself.

We conduct this research because we believe it helps advance the community industry and enables community teams to get the recognition and support that they deserve.

We hope you find this research valuable and put it into action. Most of all, we hope it helps you build more successful and meaningful communities.



David Spinks

Founder, CMX

VP of Community, Bevy

## INTRODUCTION

# Key Findings

01

## Community management is moving from a growth to a mature industry.

22% report having a dedicated community department, up from 15% last year. Community roles are also becoming more specialized, with 35% of teams having at least one person focused full-time on Community Operations.



02

## Organizations believe in the value of community, but continue to struggle to measure that value.

87% agree community is critical to the company's mission and 79% believe community has had a positive impact on their organization's objectives. But, only 10% say they can financially quantify the value of their community and only one-third can connect their community data to their customer data.



## INTRODUCTION

**Key Findings**

03

**The community software market is a blue ocean, with no clear winners (yet).**

90% of community programs include an online forum/ message board. However, the range of tools used to host communities is vast. The most common platforms businesses use to host their online communities are free tools like Slack, Facebook, and Discord. The platforms they're most satisfied with are Khoros, Discourse, and Discord. Zoom still dominates virtual events. And 43% of companies are using a community operations tool.



04

**In-person is making a comeback AND virtual is here to stay.**

29% of communities hosted an in-person event in 2021, despite the surge of COVID-19. 90% of those who host events for their community report hosting virtual events in 2021. 72% of those plan to offer the same number or more virtual events in 2022. Almost 4 in 5 community professionals who haven't hosted in-person hybrid events yet plan to do so when it is safe to gather.



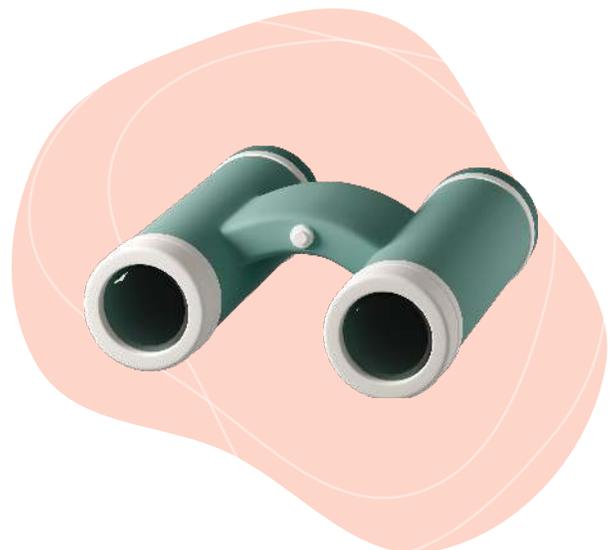
## INTRODUCTION

**Key Findings****05****Community-led events are gaining in popularity.**

44% of those who run events report that some or all of their events are community-led (hosted by members). 25% of those who have community-led events just started them in the past year. Of those who are not yet running community-led events, 49% plan to do so in the coming year.

**06****Communities are cautiously dipping their toes into Web 3.0**

15% of communities are actively working on Web 3.0 focused projects and an additional 17% are considering it. Decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) are the most common form of Web 3.0 project that community teams are working on.



## INTRODUCTION

**Key Findings****07****Community programs are increasingly focused on driving growth.**

19% of community programs are focused on acquisition as their top objective, up from 13% last year. Customer support and success continue to be the most popular objectives, but customer support decreased slightly from 26% last year to 24% this year. This represents a shift in how businesses are thinking about the value and focus of community.

INTRODUCTION

# Methodology And Demographics

The 2022 Community Industry Report is based on the responses of 778 community professionals who completed an online survey in December 2021 and January 2022.

To invite responses, we shared the survey across the CMX community in our Facebook group, Slack, and email list. We used email and social media outreach from CMX and Bevy, as well as from our distribution partners Bramble, Insided, Common Room, Grazitti, Discourse, Higher Logic, Chaordix, Khoros, and Hivebrite. Our results include community professionals from 64 countries representing a range of industries and company sizes.

For some questions, respondents were given the opportunity to write in an answer. Several of these anonymous responses are included throughout the report.

## Organization Demographics

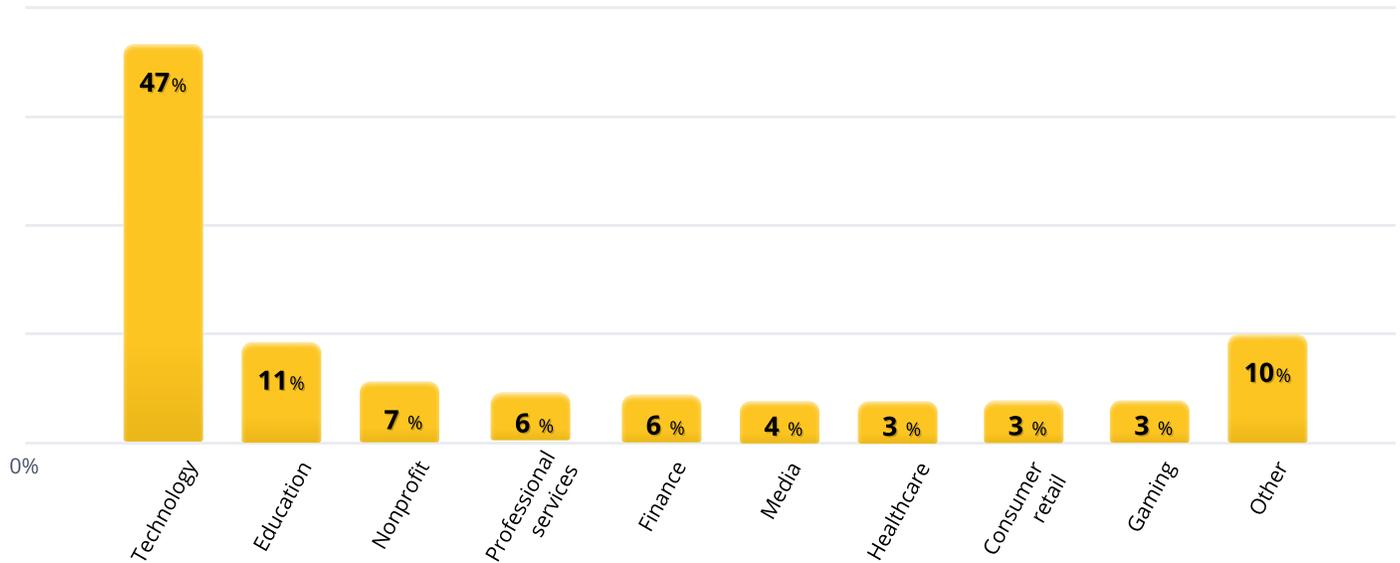
What best describes the primary focus of your organization?	
<b>B2B</b>	64%
<b>B2C</b>	41%
<b>Education</b>	17%
<b>Nonprofit</b>	14%
<b>Web 3.0/Crypto</b>	5%
<b>Government</b>	4%
<b>Other</b>	7%

Approximately how many employees does your organization have worldwide?	
<b>1 - 50</b>	34%
<b>51 - 200</b>	16%
<b>201 - 500</b>	11%
<b>501 - 2,000</b>	15%
<b>2,001 - 5,000</b>	7%
<b>5,001 - 10,000</b>	6%
<b>More than 10,000</b>	11%

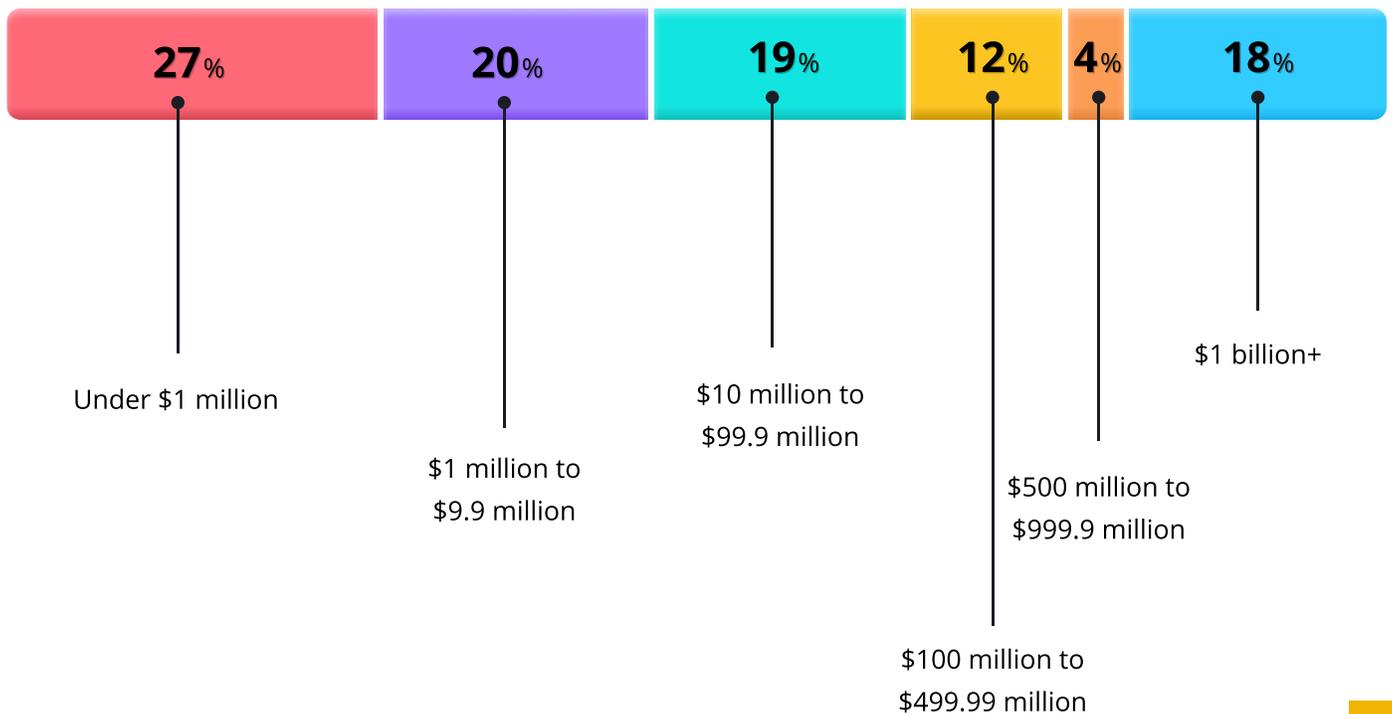
INTRODUCTION

## Methodology and Demographics

Which of the following most closely describes the industry you work in?



What is the estimated annual revenue for your company (in US dollars)?



# The Community Professional

Communities exist and thrive because of the people who run them — you! We start this report focusing on the community professional and the community team.

Our findings support what we hope you are seeing as well: **Community teams continue to evolve from a nice-to-have to a more mature and complex department within businesses.**

## In this section:

- Community Professional Experience and Demographics
- Job Titles, Team Structure, and Departments
- Community Professional Salaries
- The Most Common Frustrations for Community Professionals



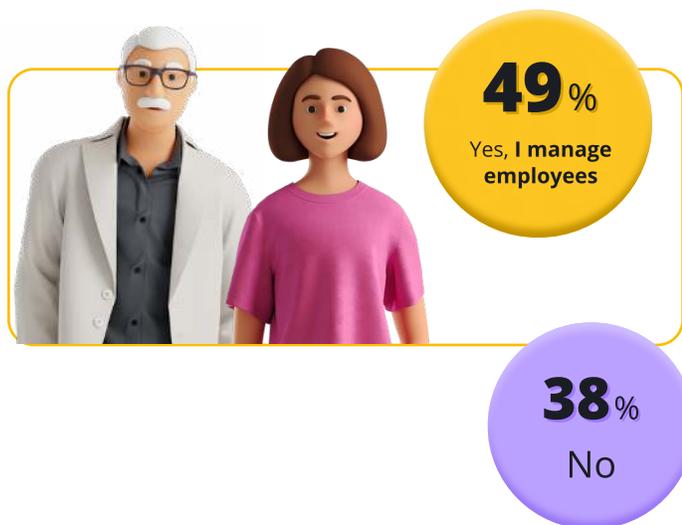
SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

# Community Professional Demographics And Experience

Which option best describes your level?	
Associate/Specialist	19%
Manager	42%
Director	20%
VP	2%
Executive/Chief Community Officer	5%
Founder	8%
Other	4%

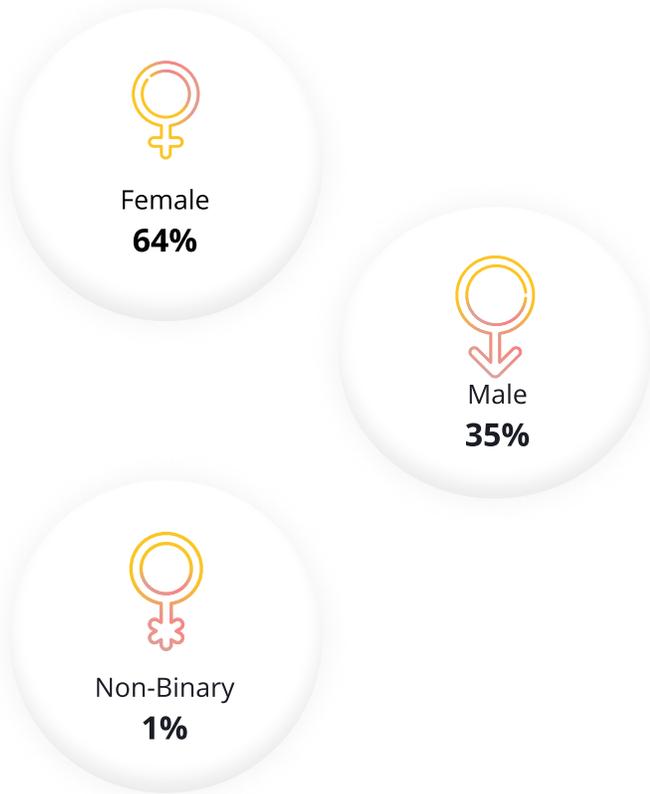
How many years of experience do you have as a community manager/professional?	
Less than 1 year	12%
1-2 years	17%
3-4 years	21%
5-7 years	22%
8-9 years	7%
10+ years	21%

## Do you manage at least one person on the community team?



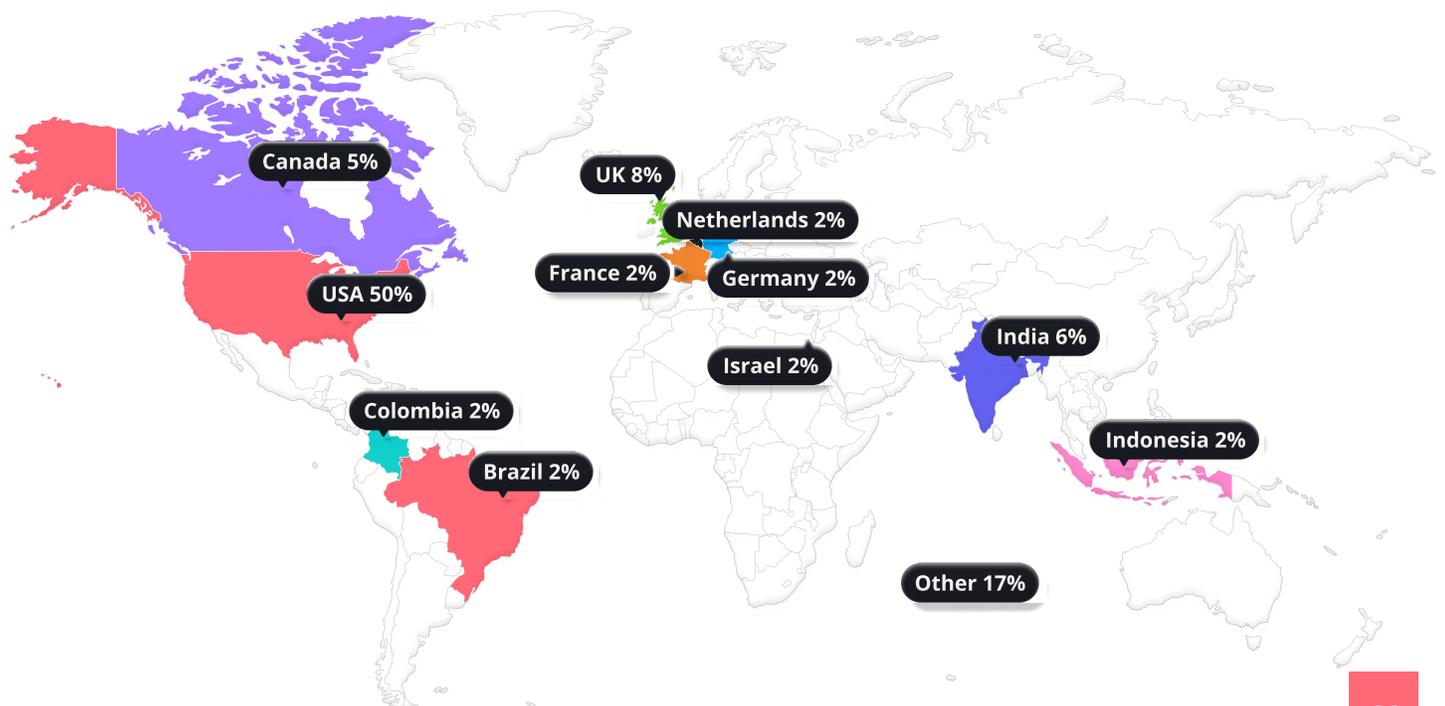
SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

# Community Professional Demographics and Experience



Race / Ethnicity	
White	70%
Hispanic or Latino/a/x	11%
South Asian	7%
Black or African descent	5%
Southeast Asian	4%
East Asian	3%
Middle Eastern	3%
Multi-racial	3%
Indigenous	1%
Other	1%

## What country do you live in?



SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

# Community Team Structure And Department

A majority — 64% — of respondents report their full-time job is focused on community. The remaining 36% are most commonly working on other roles like marketing or communications in addition to community.

While community most commonly remains part of the marketing department, **22% reported that they have a dedicated community team, up from 15% in 2021.** This is a big signal that community teams are becoming essential to the business.

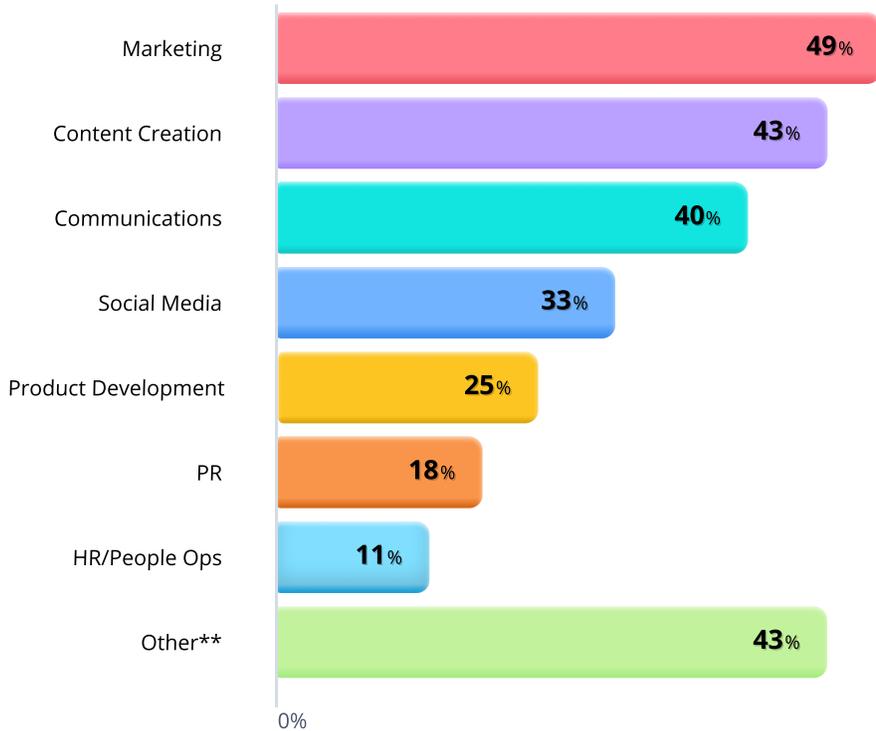


**22%** of companies report having a dedicated community department, up from **15%** in 2021.

SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

## Community Team Structure and Department cont.

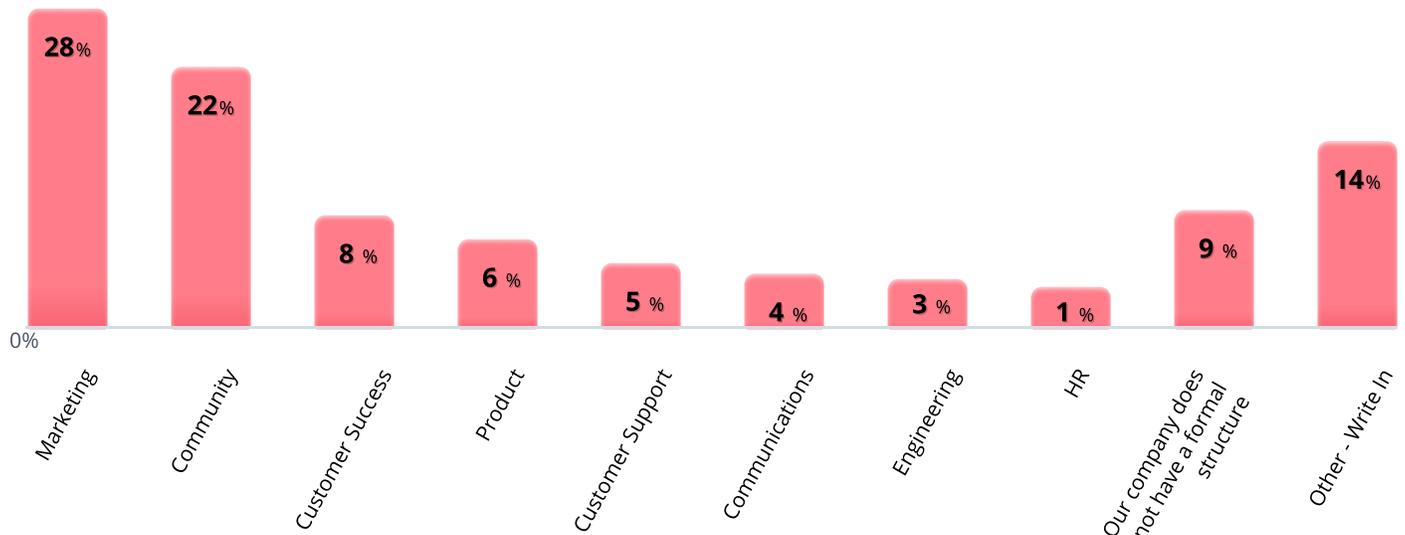
### What else do you work on in addition to community?



n=212

\*\*Common "Other" responses include customer success and support.

### What department is your community team part of?



n=773

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

**Community Team Structure and Department *cont.***

Another sign of growing stability: 89% of respondents say their community currently has a dedicated community manager, staying consistent from the 89% reported last year and remaining up by a large margin from 71% in 2017.

That said, only 44% of organizations report that they had a dedicated community manager when they launched their community. That means a lot of businesses are experimenting with community before they're ready to hire for it.

As for community job titles, they aren't standardized. The most common job title for community professionals is community manager, but outside of that there's a wide range of titles used.



**44%** of communities launch with a dedicated community manager



**89%**  
of communities have dedicated community managers

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

**Community Team Structure and Department *cont.*****What do you call yourself?**

This year, we asked for your job title. Not surprisingly, the most common title was Community Manager.

**Other common titles include:**

- Head of community
- Community Lead
- Director of Community
- Senior Community Manager
- Community Specialist



We're also seeing titles that show what part of the community someone is responsible for such as *manager* or *director of*:

 Digital Experience Programs

 Community & Success

 Community Engagement

 Customer Advocacy and Marketing

 Community Experience

 Knowledge and Community Management

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

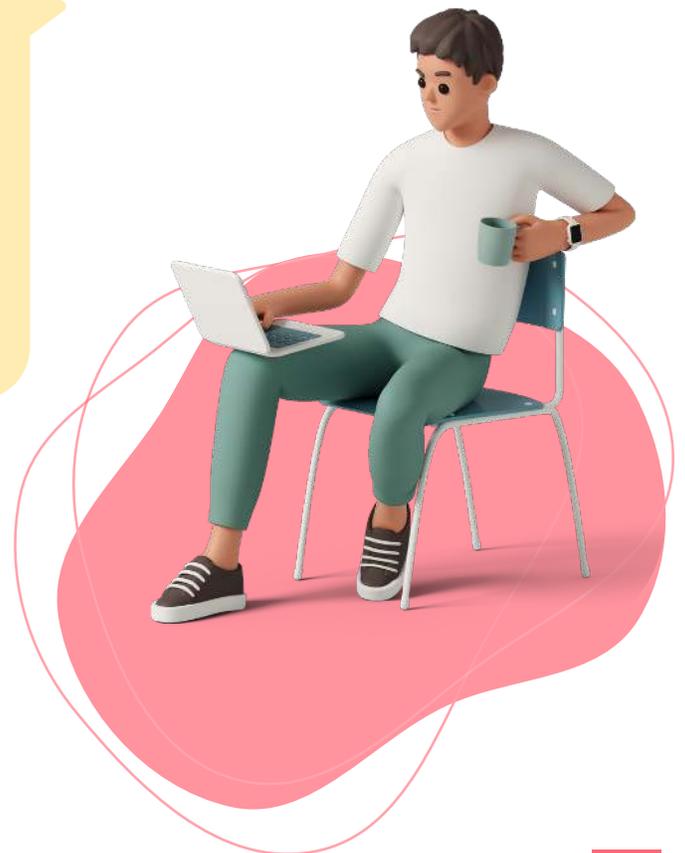
**Community Team Structure and Department *cont.***

As community teams mature, they're also becoming more specialized. This year, we identified the most critical functions and asked how communities are staffing for each of these roles: Is it a full-time job or part of someone's job? Most, it turns out, are at least a part of someone's job.

One key trend is the growth of community operations as a function. 96% of community teams have a community operations function, and **35% have someone dedicated to community operations full time**, proof that this role is becoming a critical part of community teams.

Another trend is moving past the days of the solo community manager that does everything. 24% of community teams have someone dedicated to running events full time, 24% have someone focused on community growth full time, and 23% have someone focused on education and training full time.

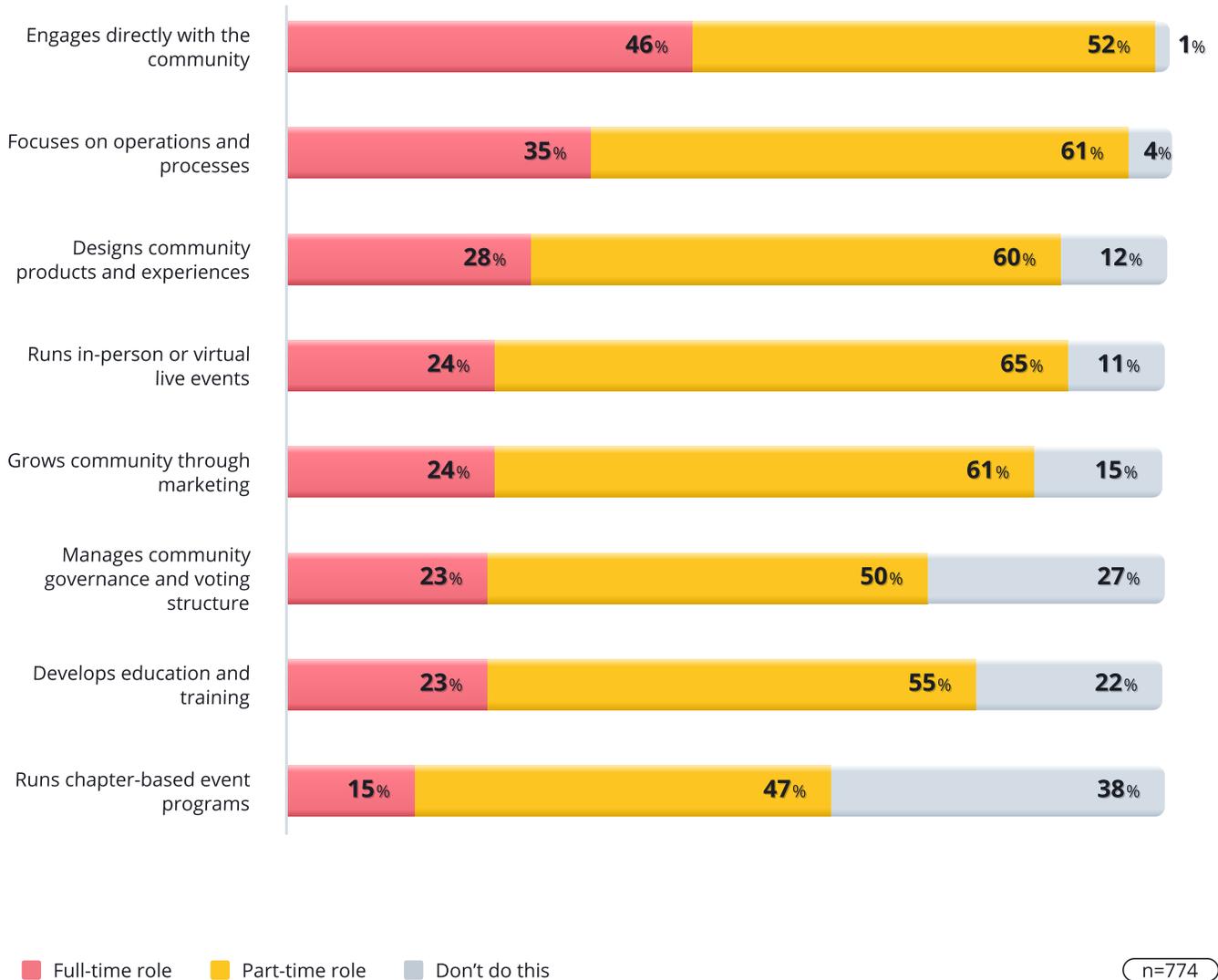
**35%** of community teams have at least one person dedicated to community operations full-time.



SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

**Community Team Structure and Department *cont.***

**Which of the following roles do you have on your community team?**



## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

# Community Professional Salaries

One question we're often asked: *What's the salary range for community managers?*

New this year, we asked respondents to provide their salary in US dollars. Of course, salaries vary based on role, years of experience, and location, some of which we break down below. We did not receive enough data to provide statistically significant insights from regions outside the US, so all of the data shared here are for US-based salaries. All average salaries below have at least 50 respondents in that segment unless noted.

by Level

**\$86,340.00**

Community Associate

SAMPLE SIZE: 51

**\$110,992.00**

Community Manager

SAMPLE SIZE: 140

**\$139,721.00**

Director of Community

SAMPLE SIZE: 91

**\$149,815.00**

VP, Founder, Exec\*\*

SAMPLE SIZE: 27



by Years of Experience

**\$84,429.00**

Up to 2 years

SAMPLE SIZE: 77

**\$110,992.00**

3 to 4 years

SAMPLE SIZE: 55

**\$124,850.00**

5 to 9 years

SAMPLE SIZE: 104

**\$153,435.00**

+ 10 years

SAMPLE SIZE: 85



\*\* This is from a small sample size of only 27 people.

SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

### Community Professional Salaries *cont.*

**\$134,446.00**

Manages employees or contractors

SAMPLE SIZE: 187



**\$95,859.00**

Does not manage anyone

SAMPLE SIZE: 187



**\$123,962.00**

Company Focus: B2B

SAMPLE SIZE: 209

**\$112,139.66**

Company Focus: B2C

SAMPLE SIZE: 187

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

# The Most Common Frustrations For Community Professionals

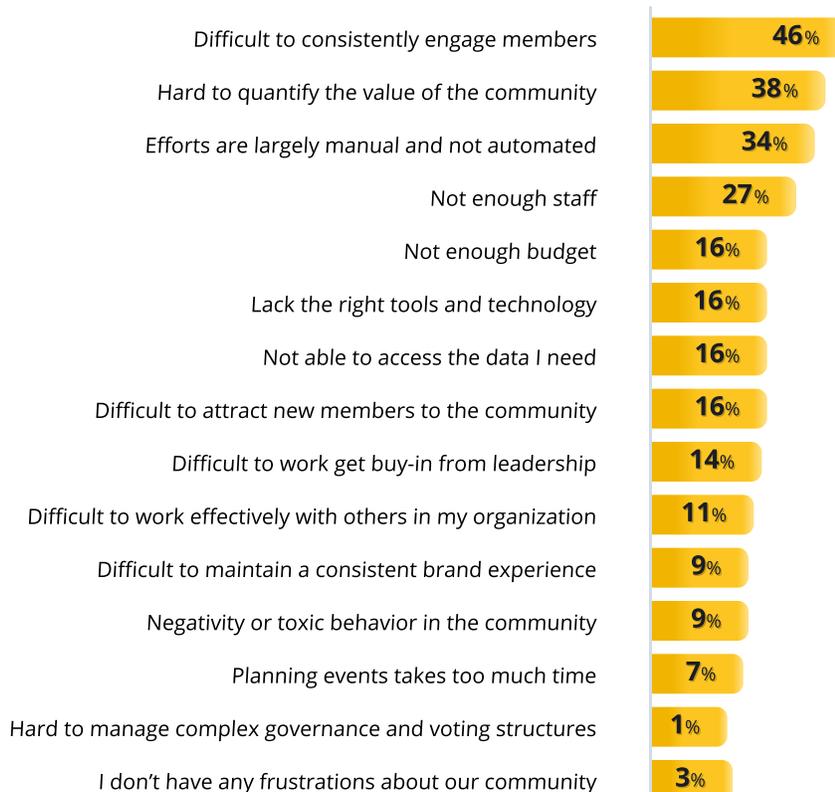
As in past years, we asked community professionals to identify the top three challenges they face. And, once again, the most common challenges are:

01. Consistently engaging members
02. Quantifying the value of their community
03. Dealing with manual efforts

These have been the top three challenges every year that we've done this research.

## What are your top frustrations about managing your community and its activities?

n=732 NOTE: RESPONDENTS COULD CHOOSE UP TO 3



0%

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

**The Most Common Frustrations for Community Professionals *cont.*****Tips from other community managers:**

Since engaging community members is such a common challenge, we asked respondents to share some of their engagement tips and techniques.



*"Creating a conversation where we genuinely ask how they personally are and what they are up to. We add an image or video that represents us in an effort to humanize ourselves and show them we are people like them. This results in loads of images and announcements or support comments that truly engage everyone and bring them together."*

*"Reach out to suggest a 1:1, with a focus on 'I'd like to meet you to understand how this community can help you and your work with a direct link to my calendly where they can book a time which works for them.'"*

*"Ask them how they got into our very niche industry."*

*"Asking 'Why are you here?' It all starts with why — the shared purpose we're all in the group in the first place."*

*"Asking new members to introduce themselves and answer the random question the previous new member asked in their intro (rolling prompt), and then following up to invite that person to share what data projects they're working on in our general channel."*

## SECTION 1 . THE COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL

**The Most Common Frustrations for Community Professionals *cont.***

*"Go-to is often tagging in other folks within the community to highlight something they've done tagging in others to respond/connect on something similar."*

*"We host a cohort-based onboarding program through Discord, where users are onboarded by other beta testers in a synchronous orientation. Once onboarded, we welcome them to the community. It's not a super specific tactic, but we see a lot of people responding with gratitude and excitement. Because our beta testers opt-in to two events before even joining our Discord community (their initial beta orientation where they learn how to use the beta product and leave feedback, and then a follow up orientation a few weeks later where they teach another member how to use the product) we've observed a pretty high level of commitment to the community from the start. It's a rigorous process, but it also ensures we're attracting deeply passionate people with a pay-it-forward mindset."*

*"We usually lean towards 'fun' engagement opportunities — riddles, trivia etc and once they've started engaging with fun stuff, we see them go on to do other things of more value."*

**Have more questions?**

Join our [Slack community](#) and ask away!



# Community Programs And Engagement

Now that we have a better understanding of community professionals and teams, this section of the report dives into the work that those people are doing.

This year we studied the different ways that communities gathered:

- **Synchronously:** A shared experience that everyone experiences and participates in at the same time, like a conference.
- **Asynchronously:** An experience that people experience and participate in at separate times, like an online forum.

We also asked what types of activities communities host, what software platforms they use, and how satisfied they were with their platforms. *(Hint: The most commonly used platforms aren't necessarily the ones that get the highest marks.)*

We examined larger trends like the continued impact of COVID-19 on in-person and virtual events, how community teams are investing in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and the extent to which teams are dipping their toes into Web 3.0.

## In this section:

- The State of Community Programs
- Benchmarking Community Engagement Rates
- Community Program Types and Participants
- How Communities Are Managed
- The Shifting Community Events Landscape
- The Most Popular Community Platforms and Technology
- Measuring Community Health and Engagement
- Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- The Rise of Web 3.0



## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

# The State Of Community Programs

Through five years of research we've seen exciting growth in the age, size, and number of communities.

Communities are getting started and staying around: In 2017 only **28%** of communities were at least five years old; now that number is **47%**.

## How long communities have existed

	2017	2020	2021	2022
Less than 1 year	27%	18%	13%	14%
1 - 2 years	23%	21%	18%	22%
3 - 4 years	23%	20%	21%	17%
5+ years	28%	42%	48%	47%



## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The State of Community Programs *cont.*****Number of members in the community**

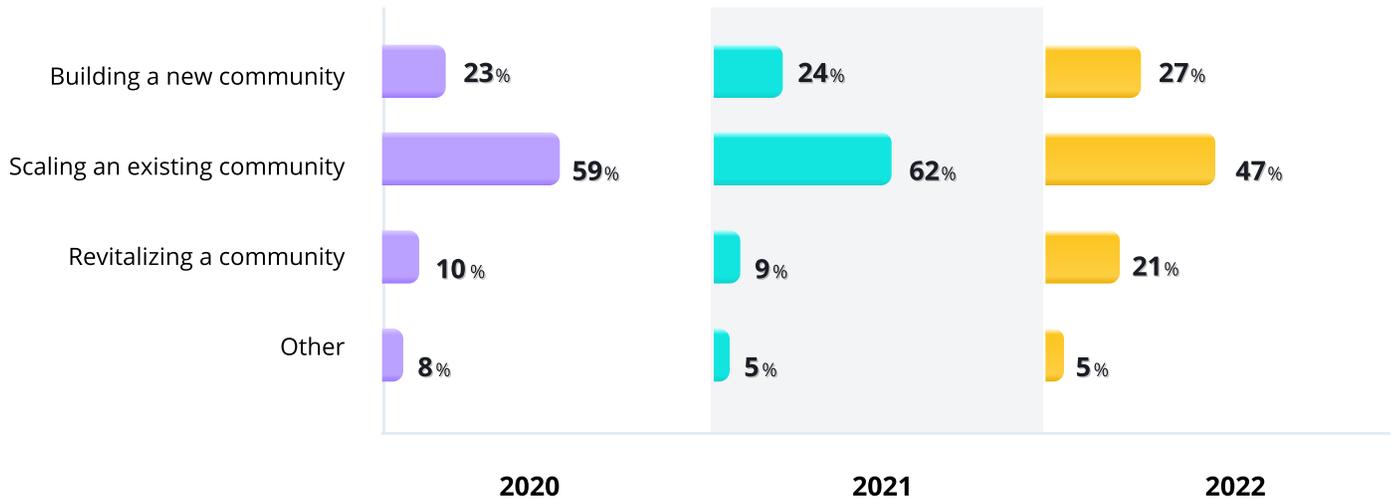
	2020	2021	2022
1 - 99	10%	7%	9%
100 - 999	22%	19%	23%
1,000 - 9,999	30%	28%	27%
10,000 - 99,999	23%	26%	23%
100K - 500K	7%	10%	8%
500K - 1M	2%	3%	3%
1M+	7%	7%	7%



SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## The State of Community Programs *cont.*

### How community strategy has changed over time



Similar to previous years, most companies report that they are focused on scaling an existing community. But this year, we are seeing a steep increase in those who report they will be focused on revitalizing existing communities.

#### Where are we seeing this shift?

Communities that have existed at least 10 years are more likely to be the focus of revitalization efforts. It’s possible that as community is becoming more popular, companies are revisiting their old programs.

 **44%** of communities launch with a dedicated community manager

	< 1 yr	1 - 2 yr	3 - 4 yr	5 - 9 yr	10 - 14 yr	15+ yr
Building a new community	70%	44%	20%	11%	10%	4%
Scaling an existing community	22%	36%	60%	64%	47%	49%
Revitalizing a community	5%	15%	16%	20%	35%	38%

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

# Benchmarking Community Engagement Rates

This year for the first time we asked participants to provide us with engagement rates for their communities. Our goal is to start developing benchmarks so you can understand how your community compares and use it to set reasonable growth and engagement goals for your community.

Most communities fall in that 1-30% engagement rate range. And you can see some clear trends in total member growth as a community gets older.

## Benchmark data: How engagement rate varies by community size

	1 - 99	100 - 999	1,000 9,999	10,000 99,999	100,000 499,999	500,000+
1 - 10%	38%	25%	26%	27%	24%	22%
11% - 20%	20%	26%	22%	27%	24%	27%
21% - 30%	12%	18%	19%	18%	16%	15%
31% - 40%	5%	5%	13%	10%	10%	11%
41% - 50%	5%	8%	4%	8%	8%	9%
51% - 60%	5%	8%	7%	3%	6%	5%
61% - 70%	5%	4%	3%	2%	2%	4%
71% - 80%	5%	4%	5%	3%	4%	0%
81% - 90%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%
91% - 100%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%	5%

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**Benchmarking Community Engagement Rates cont.**Benchmark data: **How community size varies by age of community**

	< 1 yr	1 - 2 yrs	3 - 4 yrs	5 - 9 yrs	10 - 14 yrs	+15 yrs
1 - 99	29%	12%	7%	3%	3%	1%
100 - 999	43%	34%	18%	16%	9%	10%
1,000 - 9,999	19%	37%	31%	23%	19%	30%
10,000 - 99,999	6%	15%	32%	34%	26%	23%
100,000 - 499,999	2%	1%	7%	13%	16%	17%
500,000 - 999,999	1%	1%	2%	3%	6%	7%
1,000,000+	1%	1%	3%	9%	21%	10%

*"Remember that the total size of your community matters much less than the amount of members who are meaningfully engaged."*

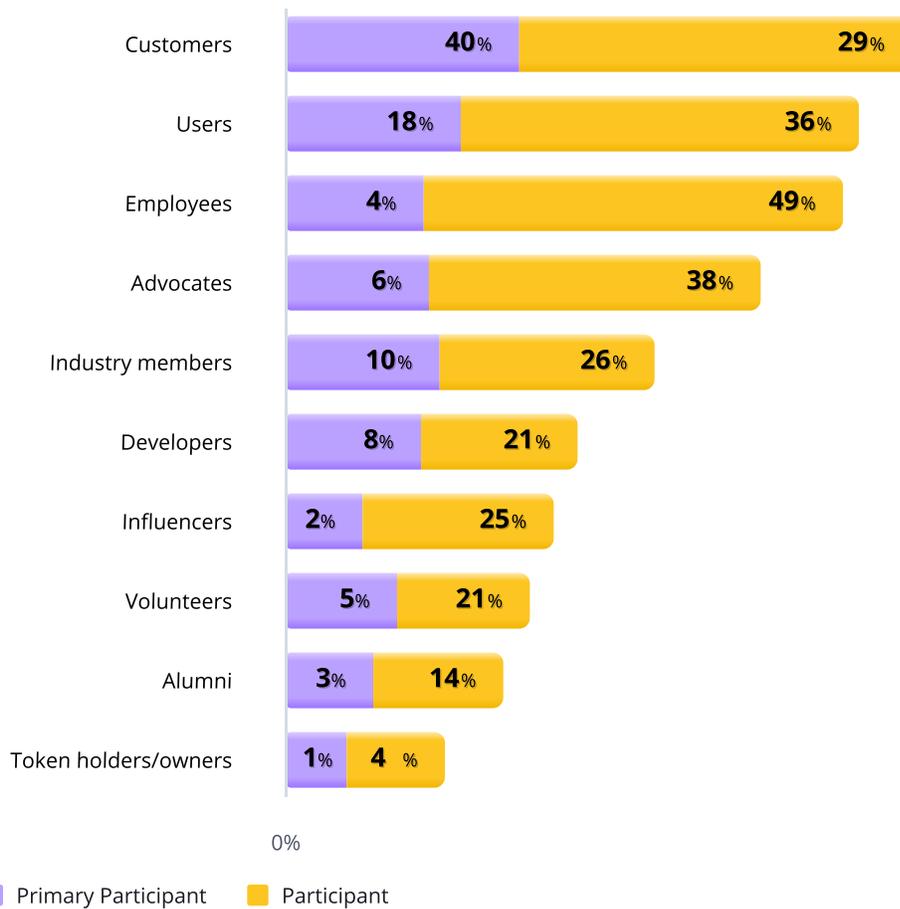


SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

# Community Program Types And Participants

As we've seen for the past few years, customers continue to be the primary participant type in communities. Some 69% of all communities serve customers; 40% report that customers are their primary participants.

## Who participates in the community you are responsible for?



**90%** of community programs hosted are asynchronous (*forums, chat rooms, and message boards*).  
**75%** of community programs are synchronous (*events, voice chats, and conferences*).



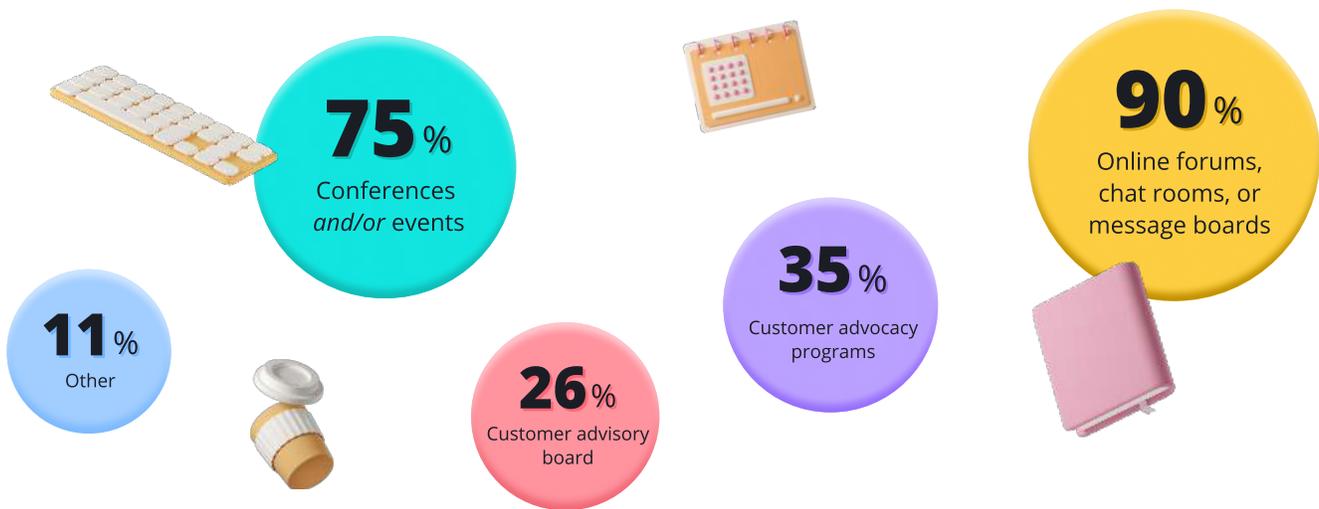
SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## Community Program Types and Participants *cont.*

If you're starting a new community today, chances are you're starting with an asynchronous program — 60% of communities start in this way. 22% started with a synchronous experience like a conference or event, and 18% started with both.

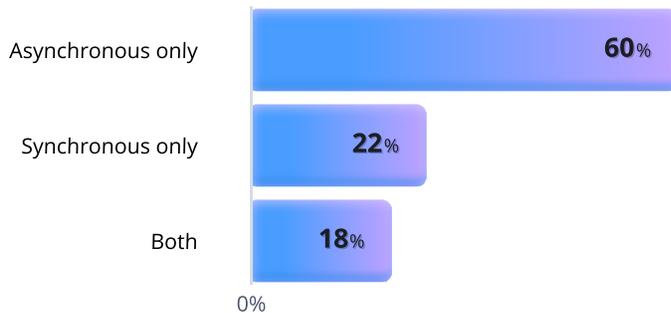
### What type of community programs does your organization host?

n=777



### In what format did your community program start?

n=732



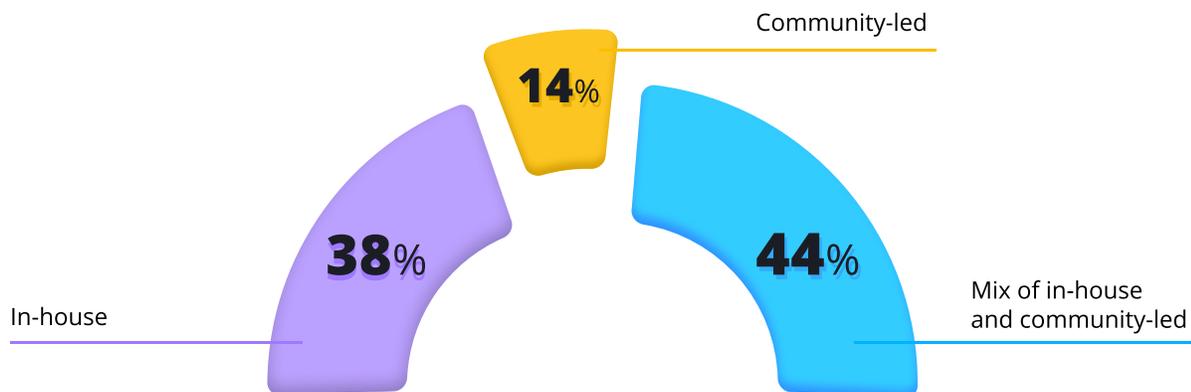
## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

# How Communities Are Managed

The most common way online forums/message boards are managed is via a mix of in-house staff and community members. Many companies (38%) prefer to manage the community entirely with in-house employees.

## What best describes how you manage your online forums/message boards?

n=702



SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## How Communities are Managed *cont.*

Another common question in the community space is “How many moderators should we have in our community?” Of course, the more active members you have the more moderators you’re likely to need. Our new benchmarking data looks at the number of moderators based on the size of your community.

We also asked whether non-employee moderators of online forums/message boards are paid; the vast majority are not. Only **14%** pay their moderators.

### Benchmark data: How number of moderators varies by size of community

	1 - 99	100 - 999	1,000 - 9,999	10,000 - 99,999	100,000 - 499,999	500,000 - 999,999	1,000,000+
1	37%	43%	29%	18%	11%	17%	6%
2 - 4	51%	44%	54%	45%	46%	17%	27%
5 - 9	12%	8%	10%	29%	9%	22%	14%
10 - 24	0%	2%	6%	11%	17%	28%	27%
25 - 49	0%	0%	1%	5%	7%	6%	6%
49 - 99	0%	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	4%
100 +	0%	2%	1%	1%	7%	11%	16%

**14%** of companies pay their moderators



## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

# The Shifting Community Events Landscape

Despite several surges of COVID-19, 20% of communities hosted in-person events in 2021.

Unsurprisingly, virtual events remained common in communities as the COVID-19 pandemic continued in 2021, with 90% saying they hosted one.

Responsibility for managing virtual events also remains unchanged. As in 2021, the community team is most often charged with hosting the company's virtual events.

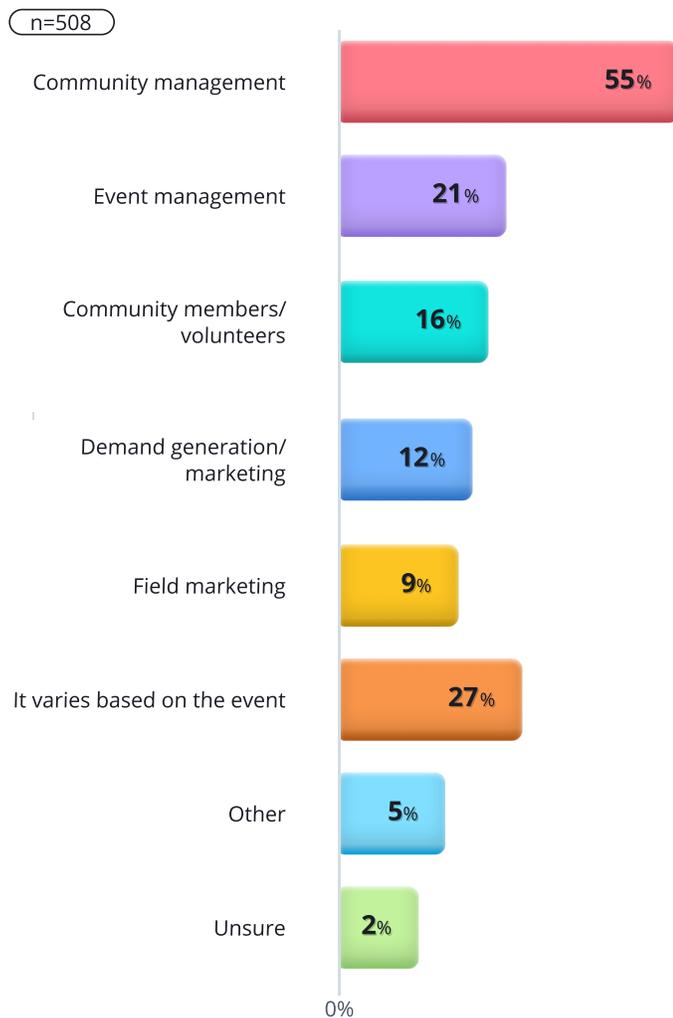
## What type(s) of events did you host for your community in 2021?

n=560



of communities hosted a virtual event with **more than 100 attendees**

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The Shifting Community Events Landscape *cont.*****What team(s) is responsible for managing your company's virtual events?**

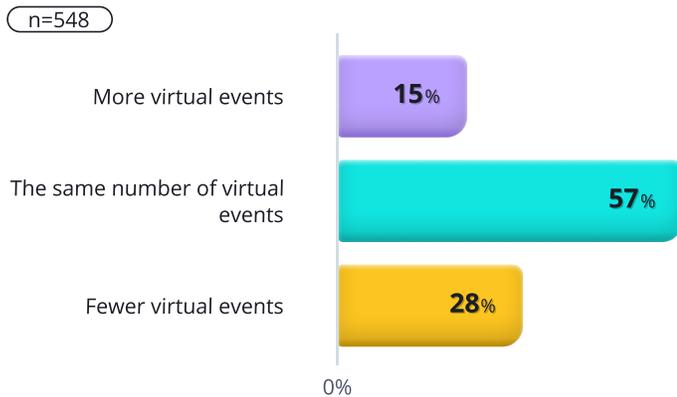
SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## The Shifting Community Events Landscape *cont.*

Virtual events appear here to stay, with **72%** of respondents planning to offer the same number or more virtual events in 2022.

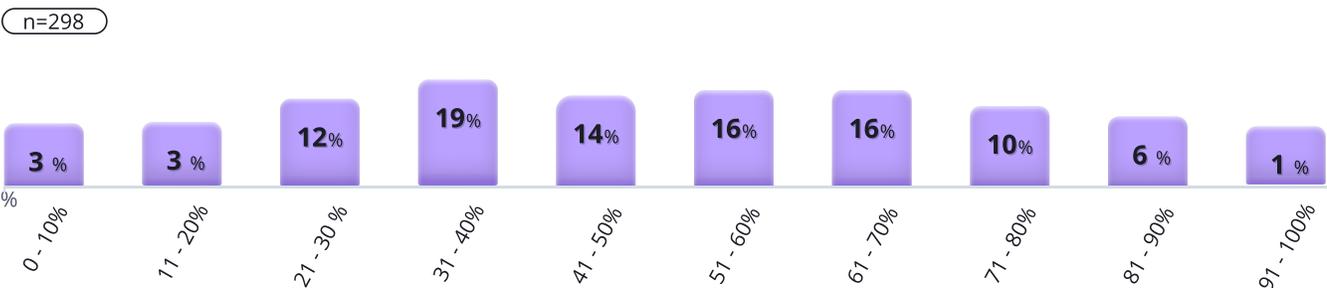
A rising star in the event space: hybrid events. **78%** of communities that did not host a hybrid event in 2021 plan to do so when it is safe to gather.

### When it is safe to gather in-person, do you plan to host more or less virtual events?



Anyone who hosts events at some point asks the same question: What percentage of our RSVPs should we expect to actually attend our event? Of course, this depends on factors like event size, whether or not the event is free, and other variables not represented in this study. The results are pretty spread out, but based on the data you can safely expect anywhere from 30% to 70% to show up.

### On average, what percentage of people who RSVP to your virtual events end up attending the event? \*



\*Events with attendance of 100 or more

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The Shifting Community Events Landscape *cont.***

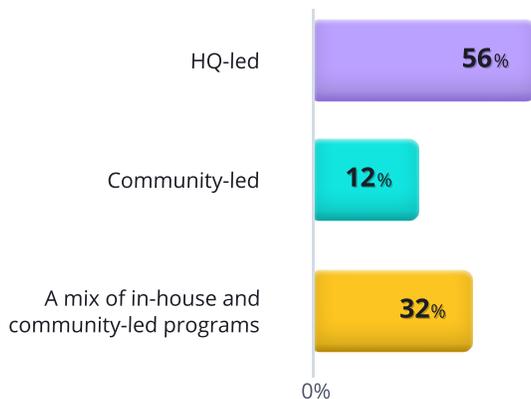
Community-led events are on the rise.

These are programs where companies empower members of the community to self-organize chapters and events on their behalf. Sometimes these chapters are regional, hosted by members for their local peers. With the rise of virtual events, members are now also organizing topic-based chapters with events focused on a specific theme.

**44%** of respondents report that some or all of their events are community-led today. Among those communities that don't have a community-led event program yet, half report they plan on launching one in 2022.

**What best describes how you manage your events?**

n=580



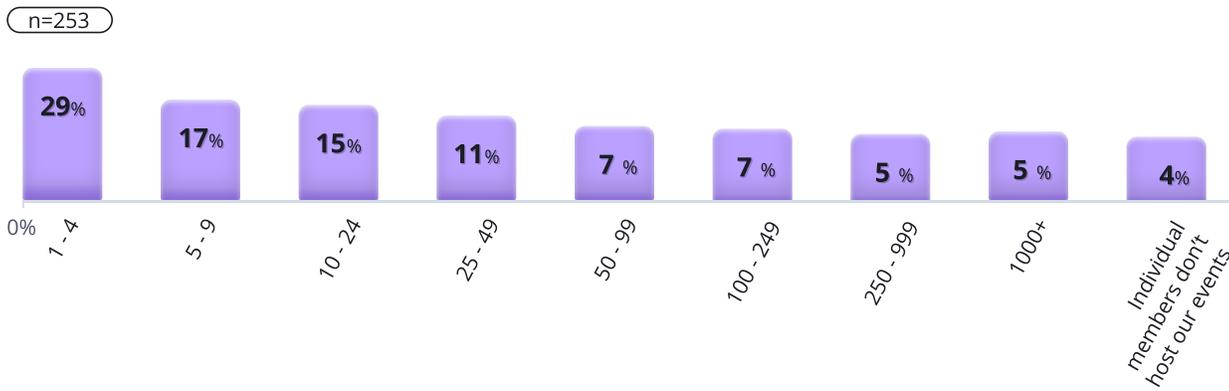
**49%**  
of those not yet  
hosting community-  
led events plan to do  
so in 2022

SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## The Shifting Community Events Landscape *cont.*

Our data shows that while some community-led programs are mature, many others have only recently started down this path: 1 in 4 of those who have community-led events started them in the past year. Most programs (29%) only have 1-4 active hosts. Some mature programs have over 1,000 active hosts.

### How many active hosts (community members who host events) do you have in your community?



### How many community-led chapters do you have globally?



### How long has your community had community-led chapters?



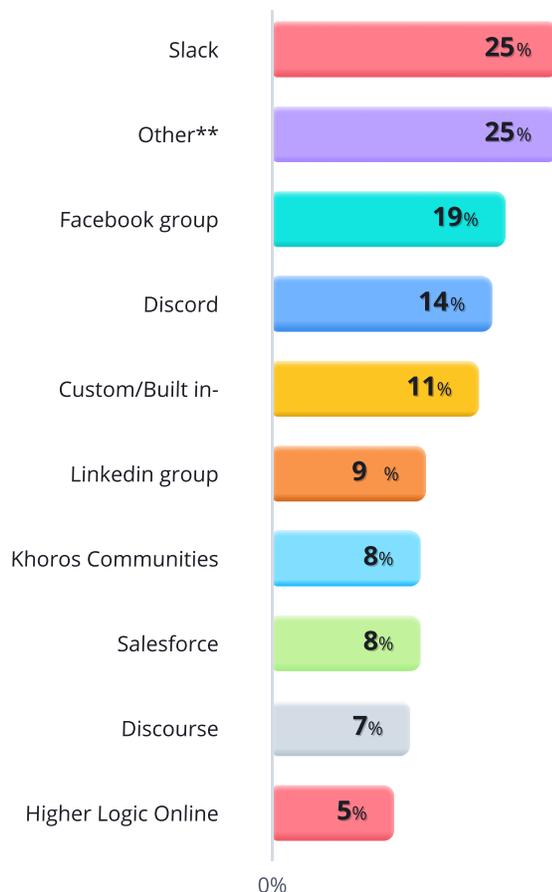
# The Most Popular Community Platforms And Technology

As we see each year, there's a wide range of community platforms that companies use, and there isn't one clear leader. In fact, 1 in 4 of our respondents selected other from our list of options — meaning that they're using a tool that isn't in the top 9 tools.

New this year, we also asked users to tell us how satisfied they are with the community platform they're using. We didn't see a direct line between the tools people use the most and the tools people are most satisfied with. Khoros Communities had the highest satisfaction (57% extremely satisfied) but only 8% of those surveyed are using it.

## What platform(s) do you use to host your community forums/message boards?

n=713



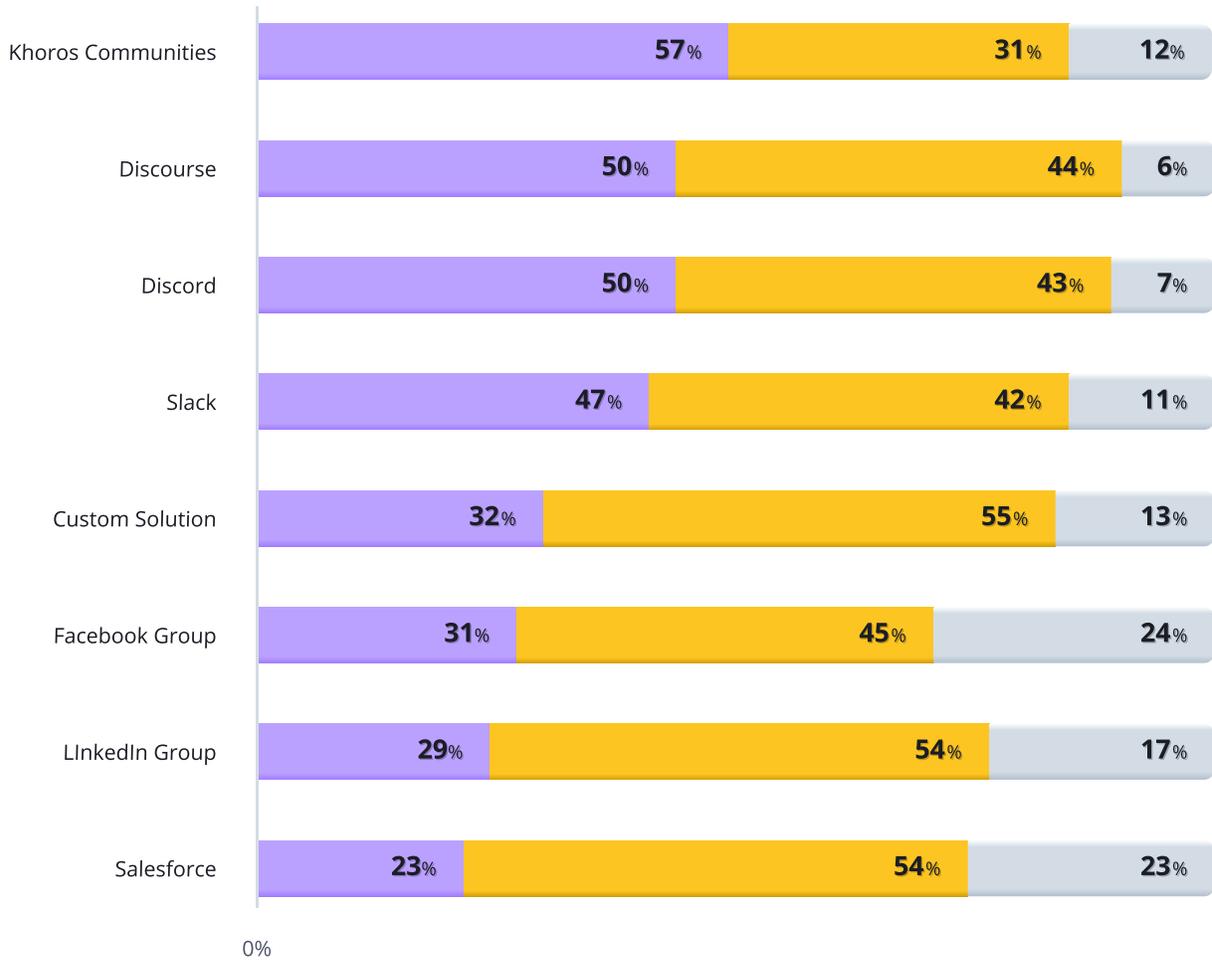
\*\*Common "Other" responses include Telegram, WhatsApp and Mighty Networks.



SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

## The Most Popular Community Platforms And Technology *cont.*

**How satisfied are you with your platform for managing your community?**



■ Extremely/Very satisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Not satisfied

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The Most Popular Community Platforms And Technology *cont.***

With virtual still being the primary way that companies are organizing events, Zoom continues to dominate as the primary event platform companies are using by a huge margin.

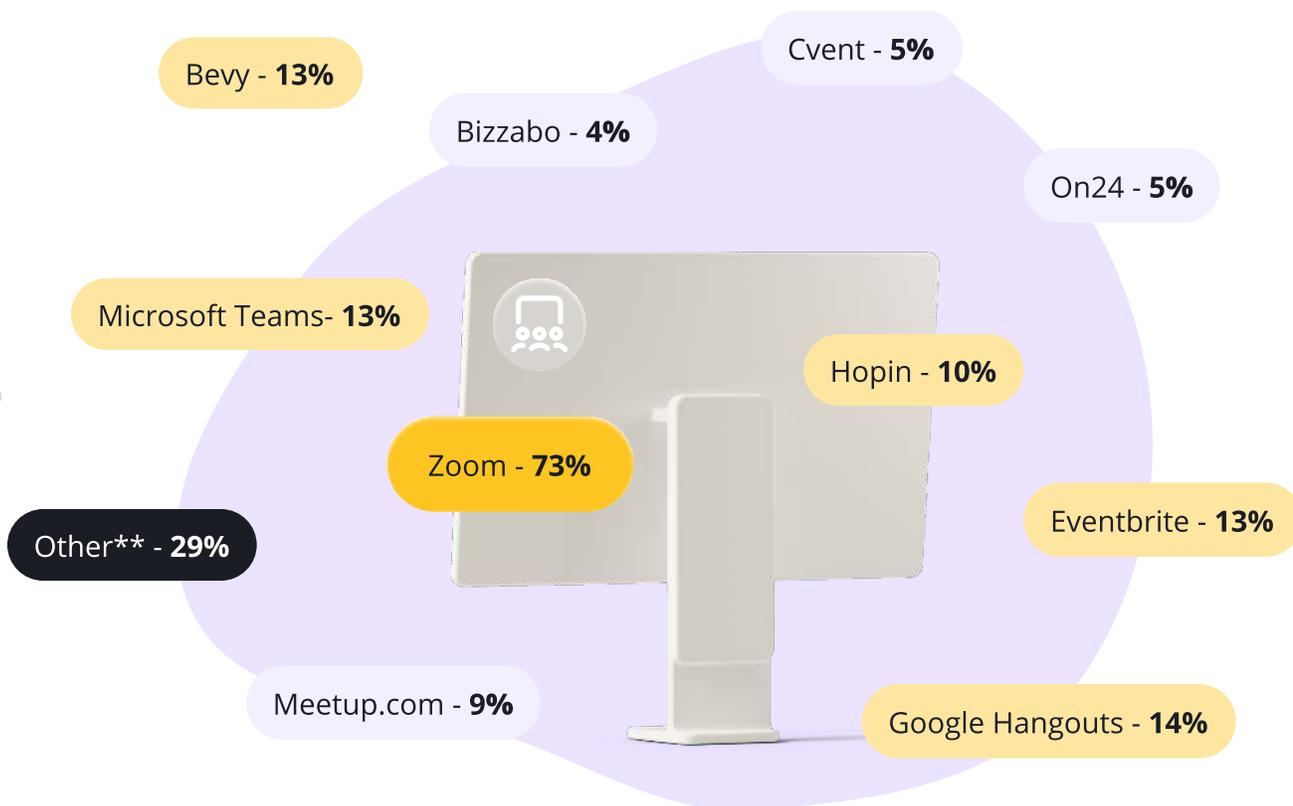
After Zoom, the platforms being used are spread relatively evenly across Google Hangouts, Eventbrite, Microsoft Teams, Bevy, Hopin, and Meetup.

**29%** of respondents selected other, which shows that, similar to forums and message board software, companies are using a wide range of tools to host their events.

Disclosure: CMX was acquired by Bevy in 2019.

**What is the primary platform(s) are you using to host events?**

n=559



\*\*Common "Other" responses included Discord, Airmeeet and Livestorm

## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The Most Popular Community Platforms And Technology *cont.***

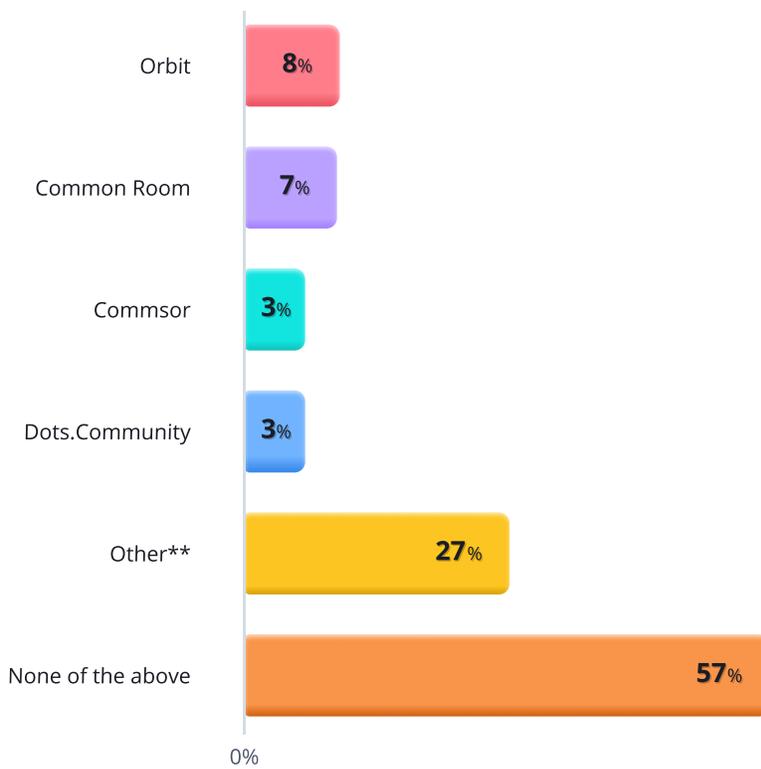
Community operations tools are on the rise.

These are tools that are built to help community teams automate processes, manage mass communications, organize data from different platforms, and become more efficient at managing their community at scale. If forums, chat groups, and events are the frontend of community management, these tools aim to be the backend.

We were curious to find out how many companies are using tools like this today. **43%** say they are. The most popular tools are Orbit (orbit.love) and Common Room (commonroom.io), and we're seeing a large number of tools entering this space.

**Do you use any of the following community automation / CRM tools?**

n=472



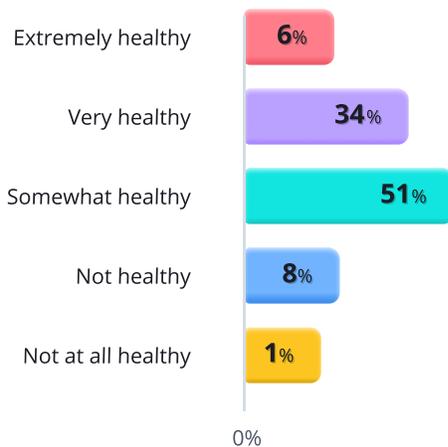
\*\*Common "Other" responses include Salesforce, Hubspot, and Marketo

# Measuring Community Health And Engagement

We wondered: How healthy do community professionals consider their communities to be? 40% report their communities are extremely/very healthy. Additionally, we were curious how common it is for communities to send health surveys. It's not overly common; only 53% of community management professionals send community health surveys to their members. Community teams have an opportunity to get to know their members better by sending regular community health surveys.

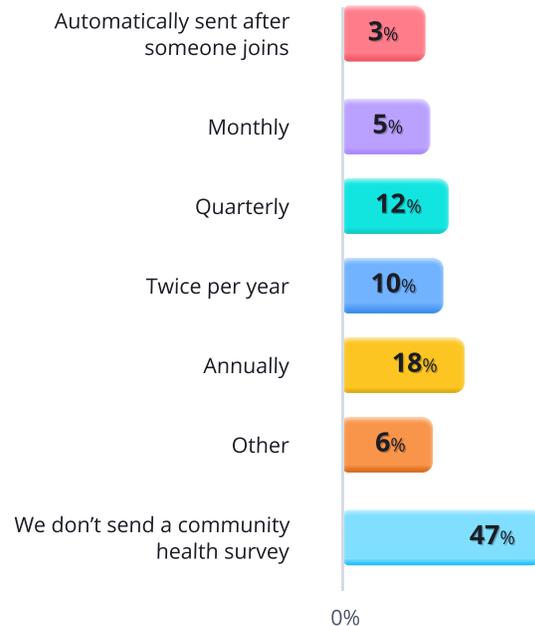
## How healthy do you consider your community to be?

n=771



## How often do you send a community health survey to your members?

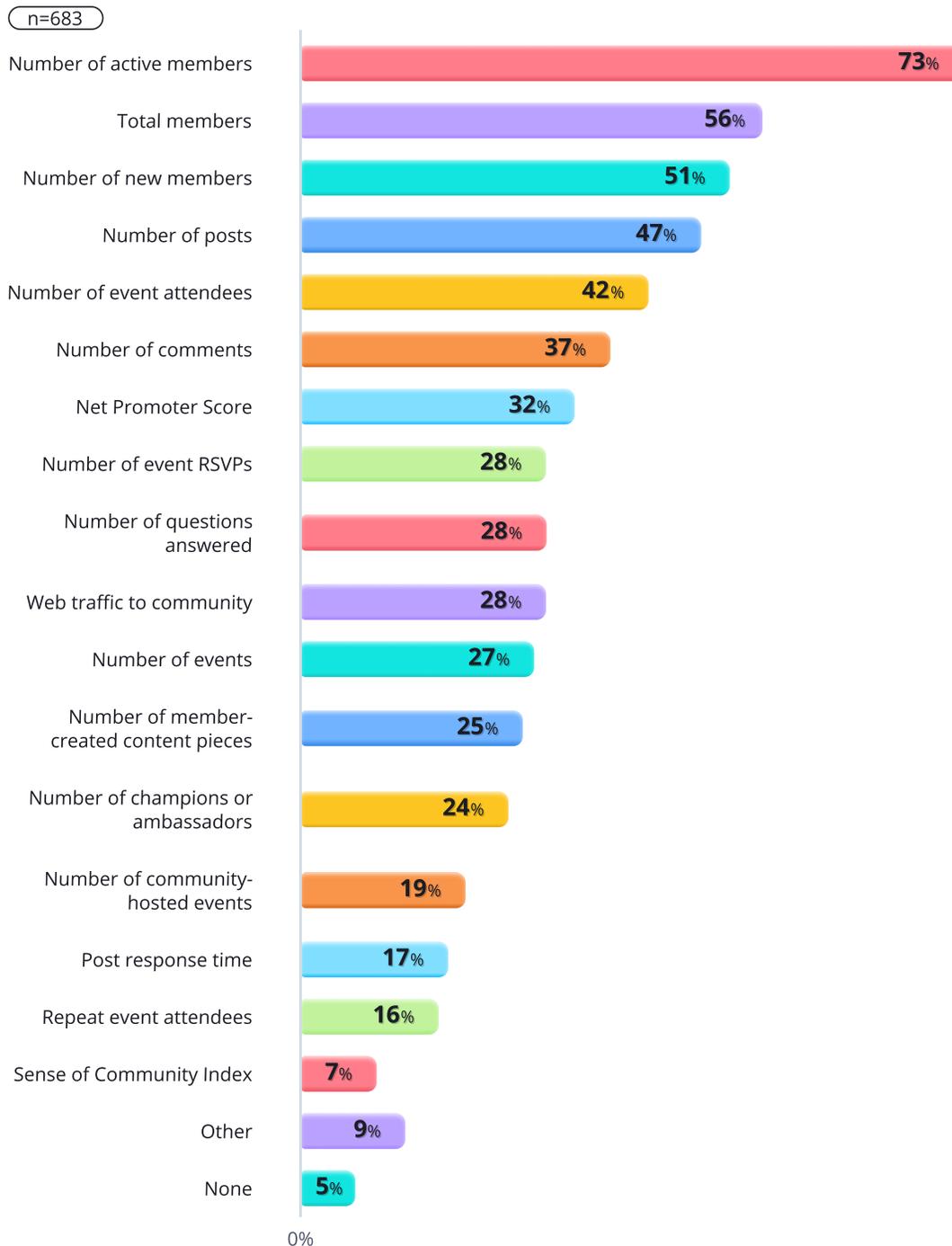
n=696



The most common metrics community managers use to measure the health of their community are also the easiest to measure: the number of active members, total members, the number of new members.

We hypothesized that the number of active members would be the most common metric used to measure the health of a community. So we asked our respondents about their definitions.

## What metric(s) do you use to measure the health of your community?



## Input from the community:

How community professionals define an active member



*"We have guidelines our community members must follow to maintain the perks of membership: a certain number of product demos, a certain frequency of social media interactions, a certain frequency of community forum interactions, and a certain number of product uses."*

*"Ideally, someone who is responsive to posts, engages with other community members, seeks to connect with others through forums, webinars, etc. Community members would be active fundraisers, returning YOY to participate, and continue growing their learning and understanding of the impact made through their participation enough to recruit others."*



*"An active community member participates at least once a week in posting or responding to messages. They belong to multiple discussion groups and provide useful, thoughtful content. If they do not host events themselves, they support events hosted."*



*"Community members who engage with content on site — basically those who take an action, log in, like, report, comment, post and reply. Our community is public and it's not required to log in to access content, so we can't count the number of visitors as this is hugely skewed by visitors who come, find a single answer and leave without feeling the need to join."*



*"A member who logs in within the last 30 days and is involved in at least one of the following community activities: 1. Make a post (discussion/question/answer/reply) 2. 'Like' a content 3. Participate in a poll 4. RSVP for an event 5. Write a blog 6. Post a comment on the blog or library content piece 7. Mark a piece of content 'helpful' or 'Best Answer' 8. Upload and download files."*



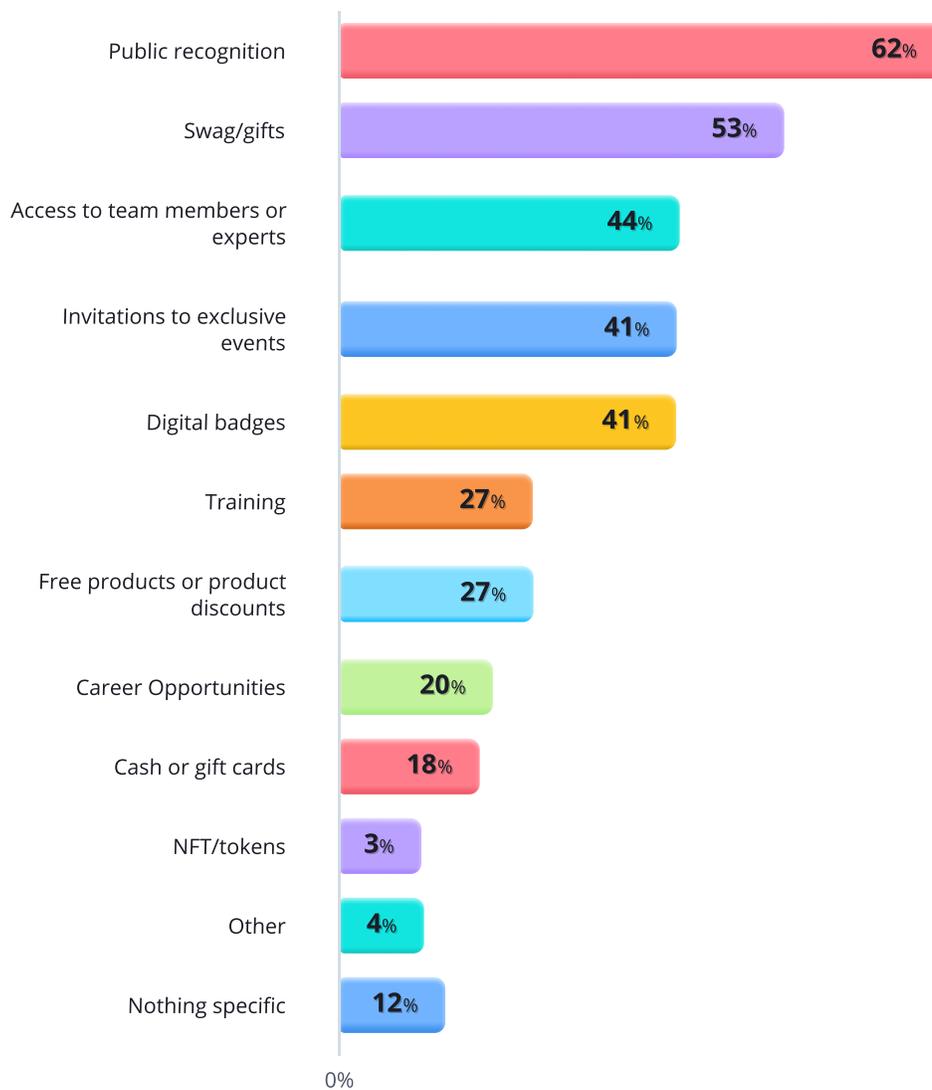
## SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**Measuring Community Health And Engagement *cont.***

Rewarding participation is a core part of most community programs. **88%** of communities reward their members for making a positive impact. Most commonly, they recognize them publicly or give them gifts/swag.

**How are you rewarding community members who make a positive impact?**

n=760



# Focus On Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion

Last year, we started asking community teams about their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs and initiatives. When we ran the 2021 survey last year, the Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd triggered an important conversation about DEI in the workplace and in the communities run by businesses.

Now, a year later, about half of respondents say that they have set specific DEI goals for their community.

We asked communities that are taking concrete steps to help those who are underrepresented in their communities to share some of their lessons and ideas.



of communities have  
**specific goals related  
to DEI**

## Advice from the community:

Steps you can take to help those who are underrepresented



*"I reach out to existing community members to encourage and invite their colleagues who live, work and are from the Global South. I am also cognizant of who is being supported and profiled within the community. For example, ensuring that we are encouraging underrepresented groups to speak at community events, and profiling a wide range of innovations in our story blogs."*



---

*"We are extremely intentional when it comes to the diversity of our community. Right now, we host monthly 'summits' dedicated to a different underrepresented group each month which allows us to feature various speakers from said group, market towards this group and allies, as well as hold a corresponding virtual job fair to help these people level-up their careers."*



*"In my role, I make sure that nobody is being left behind in the community. This means taking time to intentionally engage and recognize BIPOC people and women when joining, contributing, and being part of the community. Because they are the most underrepresented groups in the developer space, I do this to help them feel that they do belong here."*



*"Our direction as a company is coming from our diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, which is comprised of a number of employees and company leadership — led by our SVP of DEI. Right now, we are focusing on how we as employees can better ourselves and our company internally in the DEI space, while sharing learnings and practices with our communities."*



*"Our overall community strategy is to assist member institutions by increasing overall member engagement and sustain[ing] an inclusive environment to create the future of dental education in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. We held office hours at the annual Diversity meeting and are continuing to look for ways to incorporate ongoing initiatives."*



# The Rise Of Web 3.0

Anecdotally, interest in Web 3.0 seems to be increasing among community professionals — but we're still in the early stages.

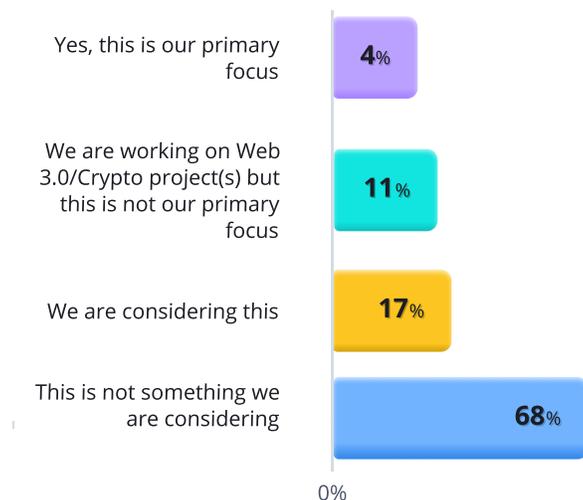
Web 3.0 is a catch-all term for the world of crypto, blockchain, and decentralization.

What does a Web 3.0 investment look like? Companies and communities create their own tokens, hosted on a blockchain. They can use tokens for gating content, exercising voting rights, and other forms of utility. They usually offer those tokens to their members, contributors, and investors. These tokens typically have monetary value and members can trade or sell them, potentially earning income.

To establish a benchmark we asked about this topic in this year's survey. The majority surveyed (68%) aren't considering investing in Web 3.0 yet, but **32%** are either already investing in it, or considering it.

## Is your company working on any projects related to Web 3.0 or Crypto?

n=615

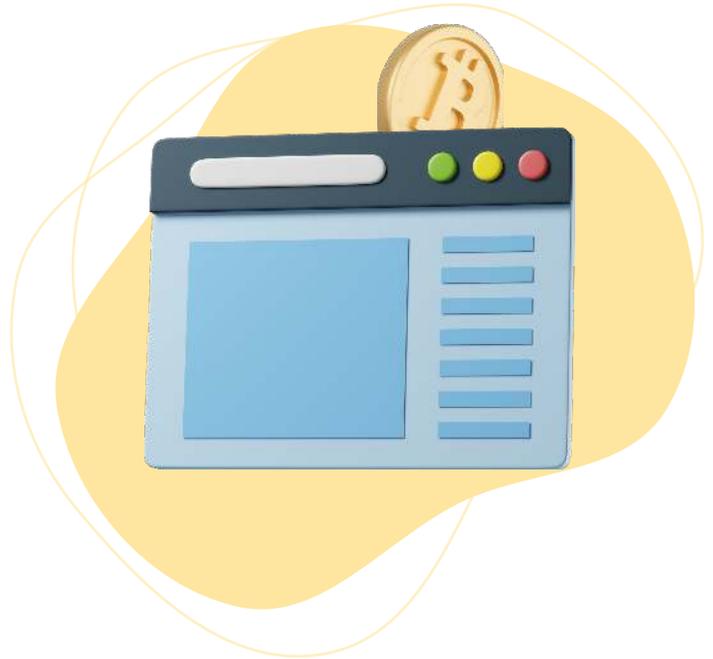
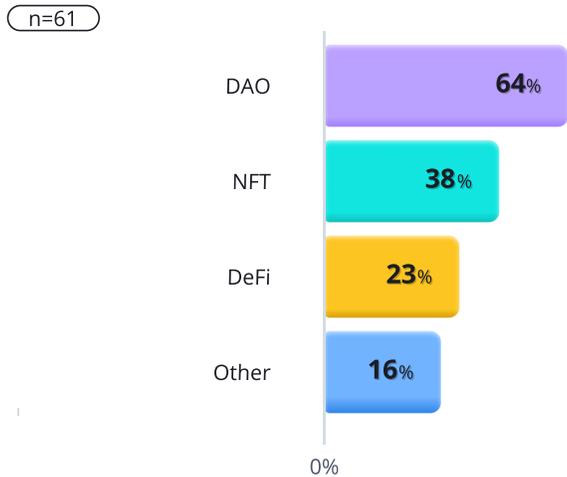


Of those working on Web 3.0 projects, the most common type is the decentralized autonomous organization (DAO). These are organizations that, in theory, are owned and governed by the community, which makes collective decisions through democratic voting.

SECTION 2 . COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND ENGAGEMENT

**The Rise of Web 3.0 *cont.***

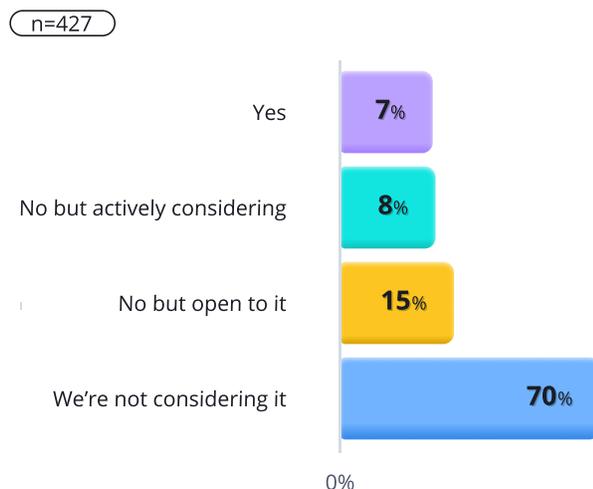
**What kind of Web 3.0 community are you building?**



While not all companies are issuing tokens, some are still working to give their community members an opportunity to become owners by allowing them to invest directly. **15%** of companies have either taken this route or are actively considering it.



**If you're a private company, have you invited your community members to invest in your company and become owners?**



# The Business Value Of Community

As you saw in section 2, one of the biggest frustrations for community professionals every year is proving the value of community.

For community to become truly established as a part of businesses, measuring and proving value is key.

This section provides insights into how businesses are measuring the value of their communities, and the extent to which the community industry is getting better at overcoming this challenge.

## In this section:

- The Most Common Community Business Objectives and Metrics
- Business Value Metrics
- The Continued Struggle to Measure Return on Investment
- Growing Investment and Confidence in Community
- Best Practices from Successful Communities

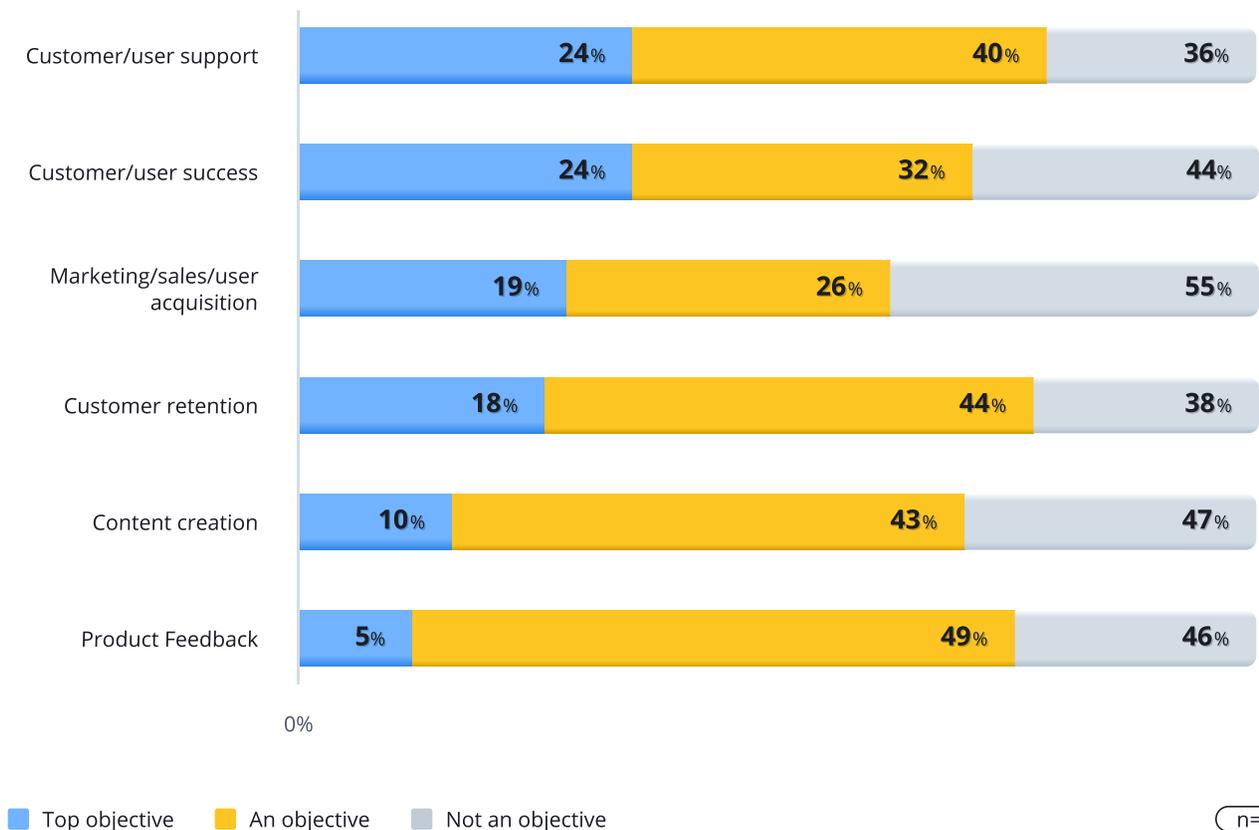


# The Most Common Community Business Objectives

Using the [CMX SPACES Model](#) as a guide, we asked respondents about the different objectives community is driving for their business.

Same as previous years, customer support once again tops the list. One big change is that 19% of community programs are focused on acquisition as their top objective, up from 13% last year. Product feedback, like in previous years, is a common objective for teams but rarely the primary objective.

## What are the business objectives for your community?

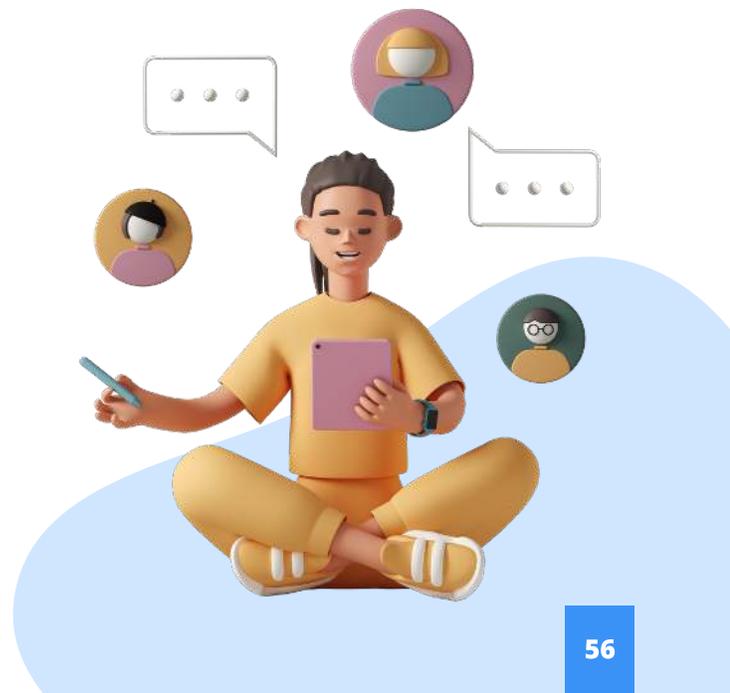


## SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**The Most Common Community Business Objectives *cont.*****Primary objectives of community over the years**

	2022	2021	2019 Online**	2019 In-Person**	2017
1	Support (24%)	Support (26%)	External engagement (29%)	External engagement (37%)	Support (26%)
2	Success (24%)	External Engagement (24%)	Support (23%)	Content/contribution (17%)	Acquisition (23%)
3	Acquisition (19%)	Success (18%)	Content/ contribution (23%)	Acquisition (14%)	External engagement (18%)

\*\*Note: In 2019, we broke down objectives by online vs in-person community programs



## SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**The Most Common Community Business Objectives *cont.***

The top metrics community professionals use to measure business impact vary by objective. We asked respondents to choose the metrics they use to measure their top business objective.

**Primary objectives of community over the years**

Objective	Most Popular Metrics
<b>Customer/user support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active users <b>(47%)</b></li> <li>• Conversation engagement <b>(42%)</b></li> <li>• Answered questions <b>(40%)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Product feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product Ideas <b>(41%)</b></li> <li>• Conversation engagement <b>(41%)</b></li> <li>• Customer satisfaction <b>(35%)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Marketing/sales/user/acquisition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New customers <b>(46%)</b></li> <li>• New user/member signup <b>(42%)</b></li> <li>• Active Users <b>(42%)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Content Creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversation engagement <b>(59%)</b></li> <li>• New user-generated content <b>(56%)</b></li> <li>• New user/member signup <b>(34%)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Customer retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer retention <b>(57%)</b></li> <li>• Active users <b>(53%)</b></li> <li>• Conversation engagement <b>(36%)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Customer/user success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active users <b>(54%)</b></li> <li>• Conversation engagement <b>(42%)</b></li> <li>• Customer satisfaction <b>(40%)</b></li> </ul>

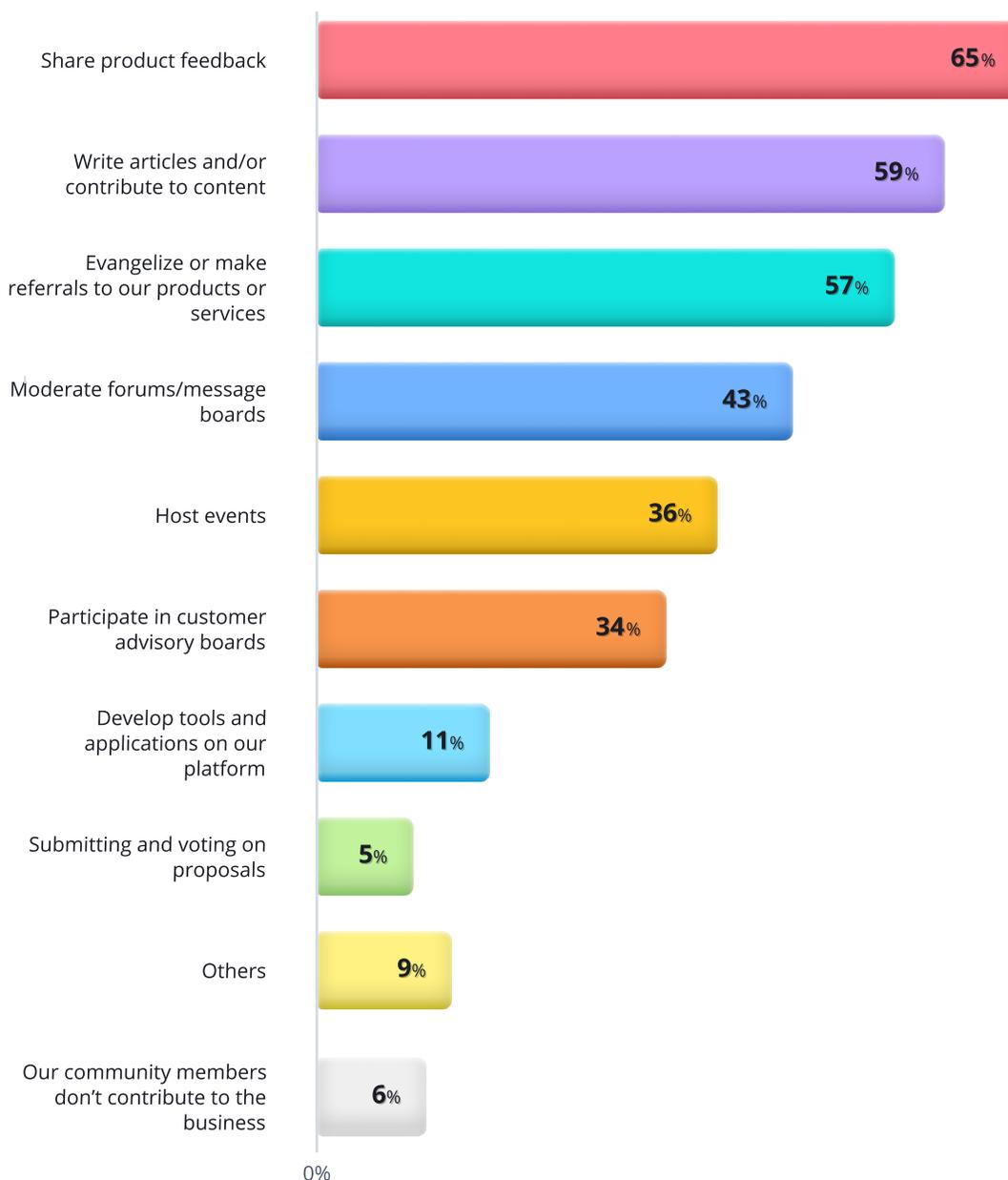
## SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**The Most Common Community Business Objectives *cont.***

Almost all respondents (**94%**) report their community members are contributing to their business goals, most commonly by sharing feedback, contributing to content, or making referrals.

**How are your community members contributing to the business?**

n=762



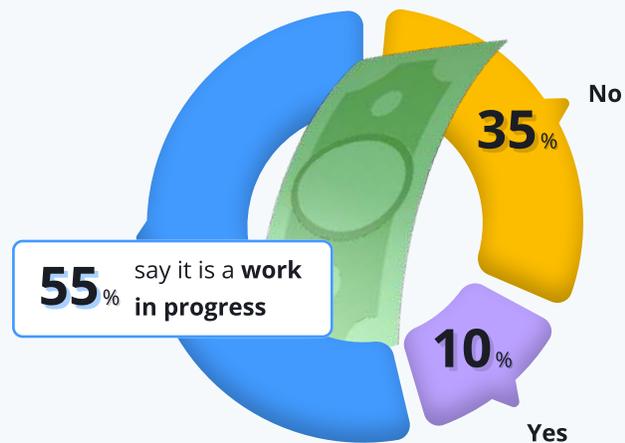
# The Continued Struggle To Measure Return-On-Investment

Just as we saw in 2021, the majority of respondents say that financially quantifying the value of their community is a work in progress.

The percentage of respondents who say they can quantify the business value of their community actually went down slightly from **12%** last year to **10%** this year.

Are you able to financially quantify the business value of your community?

n=680



## SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**The Continued Struggle To Measure Return-On-Investment *cont.***

In order to measure the value of community, it's critical that teams can connect their community member data to systems where sales and customer data is tracked.

Compared to 2021, we see a small uptick in the percentage of communities reporting they have a customer relationship management (CRM) system. However, the percentage of communities that can connect community and customer data via their CRM is relatively consistent year-over-year (35% in 2021 compared to 37% this year).

**Does your community data connect to your CRM?**

n=638



SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

## The Continued Struggle To Measure Return-On-Investment *cont.*

Only a small percentage of respondents can quantify the value of their community. Of those that are able to do so, half said their community is driving a return-on-investment (ROI) of at least \$1 million.

### What business value has your community provided to the organization?

n=56



# Growing Investment And Confidence In Community

Despite the continued struggles to measure the value of community, investment and optimism around community as a critical part of business remains very high.

87% of respondents agree community is critical to their company's mission. And that's not just true of the largest programs; community is seen as mission-critical regardless of how many members are in the community or how old the community program is.

Our survey uncovered other signs that community's value to business is being recognized:

- Increased investment
- Growing interest from other departments
- Greater perceptions of positive impact

**62%**

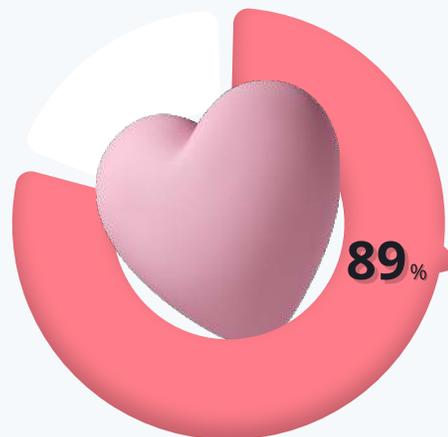
say their organization will be increasing their investment in community

**82%**

have seen increased interest in community from other departments

**79%**

believe community has had a positive impact on their organization's objectives



agree that community is critical to their company's mission

# The Future Of Community

This year we asked respondents, “When you think about the future of community, what do you think — or hope — will happen?”

There’s a clear theme in the responses. Community professionals look forward to a day where the business value of community is better understood but not at the cost of genuinely connecting people and building belonging.

They believe the need for authentic community has never been higher, and they see a bright future for this industry.

*“I think community is a very exciting medium that we're only kind of scratching the surface of its full potential and the place it can hold in people's lives. I hope that it marks a shift away from goading capitalistic ideals where we're all just doing stuff for the sake of generating revenue to actually actively using it to make a difference in people's lives. If covid has taught us anything it's the value in being connected.”*



*“The future of the community is bright. One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been that everyone is finally starting to realize this and the power a community can have on the business and bottom line.”*



*“It's integrated into the business model of all companies who benefit from it – at the very least it's free feedback from customers. At most, it's a place to build and grow substantial relationships.”*





*“Businesses will continue to see the value in being community-led and the power of building products and services will become more thoughtful and genuine as it lands in the rightful hands of the people. On a broader note, I hope that community will keep connecting more people in more real ways, as this will connect us more with how we are wired as a species [and] result in a happier human race.”*

*“I really hope companies begin using community feedback to inform product and business strategies and rely on community professionals to synthesize and make sense of that feedback. It seems like as time goes on, community roles are becoming more established, which I hope also means the industry sees pay increases.”*



*“Internally, a commitment to the community, budget, resources, etc. that help amplify our community's value into 2022. Overall, peer to peer problem solving, knowledge transfer, creating a separate brand for the community that serves our existing customers but also opens to be a space for all in the philanthropic space to connect.”*



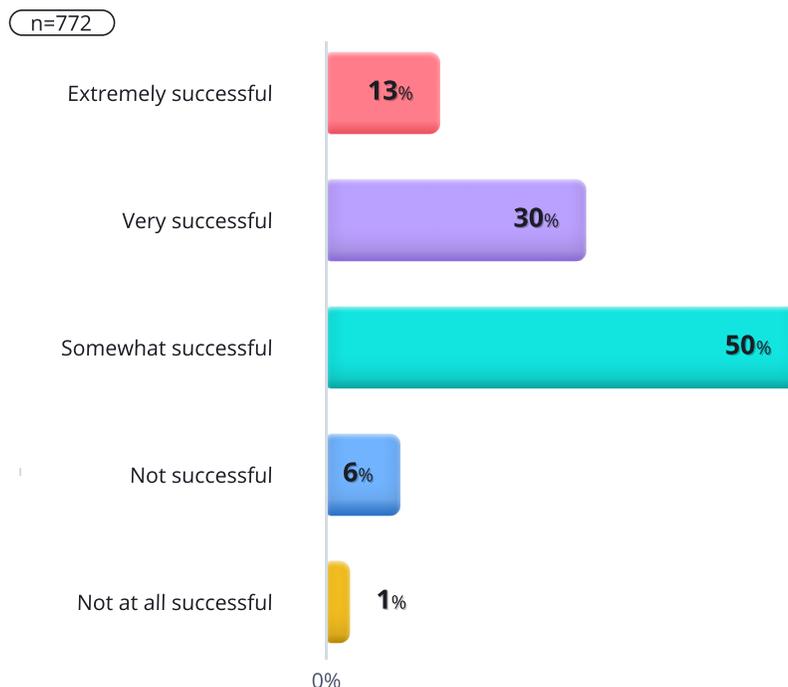
# Best Practices From Successful Communities

Finally, we wanted to see if the data showed us anything about what makes some community programs more successful than others.

To do this we asked, "How successful has your community been at impacting business goals?" and we dug into the data from the respondents who rated their community highly.

Almost half (43%) of the respondents report their community as very successful or extremely successful. We sum up the 10 key things most of these companies are doing below.

## How successful has your community been at impacting business goals?



## SECTION 3 . THE BUSINESS VALUE OF COMMUNITY

**Best Practices From Successful Communities *cont.*****10 Keys to Building Successful Communities**

(based on data collected from 778 community builders)

- 01** Dedicate at least one full-time community manager
- 02** Provide a variety of paths for community members to contribute
- 03** Proactively reward your community members for contributing
- 04** Develop customer advocacy programs and customer advisory boards
- 05** Host large events (of 100+ people) to energize your community
- 06** Scale your events with a mix of community-led and in-house staff
- 07** Build out a community operations function in your team
- 08** Set specific diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)-related goals
- 09** Send a regular community health survey at least once per year
- 10** Make community a dedicated department in your company



# What's Next?

We hope this report helps you in planning for the year ahead, designing your community strategies, and building more successful communities and community teams.

Our mission at [CMX](#) is to advance the community industry and help professional community builders thrive. We do that through our free online community spaces, training courses and certifications, virtual and in-person events, a job board, and lots of content like this report!

If you're building community, or curious about building community, we're here for you!

Want to lurk and learn? [Subscribe to CMX Weekly!](#)

Ready to dive in? [Join the CMX Community](#)



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Thanks again to our partners for helping distribute this survey!



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