

# ADVICE ON EVERYTHING

FROM COMMUNITY  
MANAGERS FOR  
COMMUNITY  
MANAGERS



MARJORIE ANDERSEN



HELEN CHEN



DAVID DEWALD



OLUFUNMILAYO  
MAKINDE



RYAN PRIDDY



THE COMMUNITY  
**ROUNDTABLE**



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**FOCUS ON  
BECOMING A  
STRATEGIC PARTNER  
ACROSS BUSINESS  
LINES.**



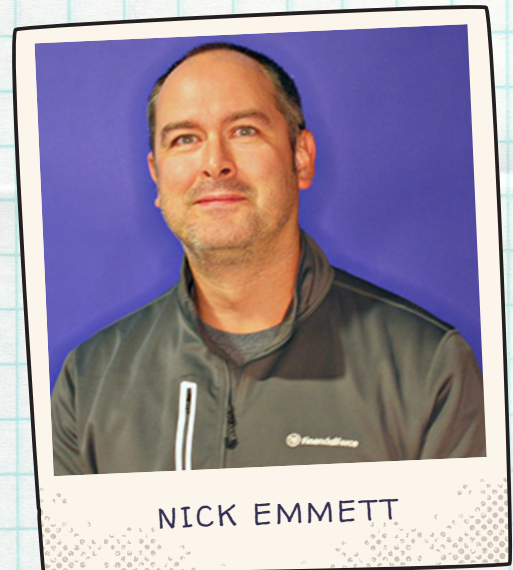
If you're having trouble figuring out how to connect to org goals, focus on becoming a strategic partner across business lines.

**An incredibly powerful characteristic of communities (and community builders) is the ability to break down silos.** If you're having conversations with other parts of the business about how to help move work forward and achieve goals (and creating actionable plans to do so), you're inherently connecting to the bigger organization strategy and figuring out ways to deliver value to your community members and the organization.

This helps you create meaningful metrics which then helps you articulate community value holistically.



BEING AN ACTIVE  
MEMBER OF  
COMMUNITIES FOR  
COMMUNITY  
PROFESSIONALS IS  
SUPER IMPORTANT!



**When you work in online communities, and likely in a very small team - perhaps even as small as just you - it's so easy to feel alone when no-one around you really understands what it is you do!**

Being an active member of communities for community professionals is super important - join them, ask questions, share tips, network, build relationships, attend user groups, co-working days, conferences - anything to build your network and be with your tribe.

You'll never regret and it will genuinely help in so many ways!



### ONE MINUTE COUNTS.



**Slowing down to focus and breathe for one minute has a big impact.** I use a meditation app (10% Happier) as a guided timer from my desk or on a quick walk.

Whenever a project, a meeting, or a whole day takes a turn toward the wild side I use this to re-center. Then I can reconnect with what is most important within the chaos. Do we need to revisit timelines, goals, kindness, collaborative support, basic listening, etc.?

Slowing down brings the focus back to what is important so I can actually get more accomplished.



**OWN YOUR  
ROLE AS AN  
EXPERT.**



**You know so much more than you  
think you do!**

What you think is 'basic' knowledge, is  
a lightbulb for others.

Own your role as an expert.





IT'S OK NOT TO KNOW THE  
ANSWER...BUT YOU BETTER  
KNOW WHO TO GO ASK.



It's ok not to know the answer... but you better know who to go ask. What you know is not as important as who you know.

**No one will remember coming to you with a question and you didn't have the answer, what they will remember is them coming to you and you leave them empty-handed with no direction.**

Log off the computer, close the book, put the pencil down, and build relationships outside of your team, whether it is a cubicle(s), shift, hallway... whatever your space is.

**Be a part of a space and create space.**



**DO A LEVEL-SET... WITH STAFF  
AND/OR OTHER INTERNAL  
STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT WHAT  
COMMUNITY IS.**



If Community is a new program and Community Manager is a new role to your organization do a level-set before launching with staff and/or other internal stakeholders about what Community is, its potential to influence and impact on your organization and provide details about the role of a Community Manager.

Also, describe how staff can be involved with and support the community initiative.



FIND THE COURAGE TO TAKE THE  
NEXT [CAREER] BRANCH, AND DON'T  
CHOOSE TO STOP CLIMBING WHERE  
YOU AREN'T YOUR BEST SELF.



I remember Rachel Happe describing to me career trajectories as a series of branches, and to take the branch that is better now (even though it may not be the "best" branch).

That was tough to internalize as I left jobs, found myself with bad managers, or in roles where Community wasn't understood. **To get the courage to jump to each branch takes a wealth of trust in yourself.** And it doesn't really get easier! But I encourage you to find the courage to take the next branch and don't choose to stop climbing where you aren't your best self.



**ALWAYS ADVOCATE FOR  
YOUR COMMUNITY.**



Always advocate for your community. **No one cares as much about their needs as you do - and no one can do as much to create the best experience.**

The business's focus is often on other areas and vendors don't seem to have cracked the code when it comes to how end-users interact with technology. Community managers understand better than anyone how people are connecting with the community and the information within. Use those insights to help teams improve their presence, communication, and responsiveness.

Be the Community Voice when working with vendors and partners. Remind them of what's important.



**DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE  
YOUR OWN ADVOCATE.**



Don't be afraid to be your own advocate.

**Talk up your program and your diverse skill set.  
Community Managers possess a wealth of knowledge  
and range of expertise. (We have to, to keep the lights  
on in our growing communities.)**

Cross-collaboration with other teams will help amplify you and your program throughout the organization. Think of how you may apply your expertise to or leverage the power of your community for another department or team. Increased exposure to a diverse internal audience raises your stock and creates program awareness; two things that are critical when trying to expand your community program.



**KEEP THE RESEARCH  
AND INDUSTRY  
BENCHMARKS HANDY.**



Keep the research and industry benchmarks handy.

Most people in an organization are upfront about not understanding community as a business model, how to build it, and how to measure its success.

**Being able to confidently speak to industry research, calling out industry best-in-class standards, and utilizing benchmarks helps people trust your approach.**



**HAVE A STRONG  
SUPPORT SYSTEM WITHIN  
YOUR PROFESSIONAL  
COMMUNITY.**



Have a strong support system within your professional community.

**There's nothing like a friend who gets the challenges of your role but is outside your organization/field so they can empathize while offering an outside perspective.**



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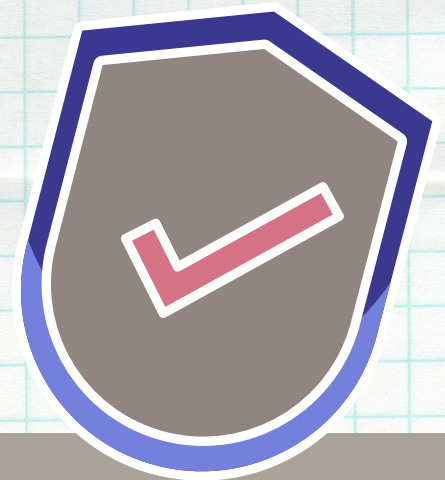
**BE TRANSPARENT  
AND AUTHENTIC!**

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Be transparent and authentic!

**Keeping your community's  
mission at the forefront will  
help with this, and facilitate  
impactful connections.**

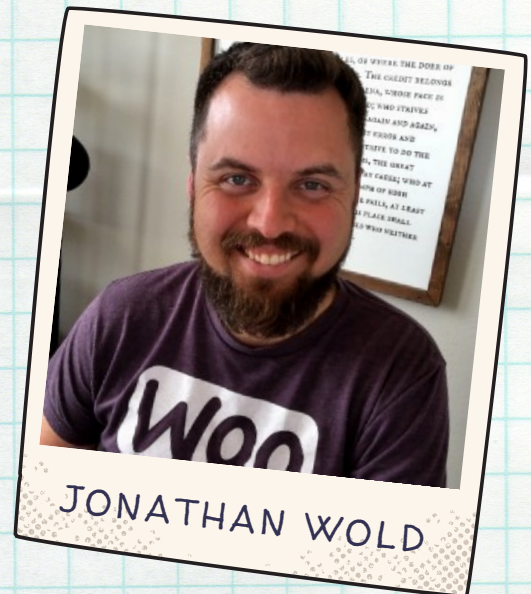




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**DON'T LOWER YOUR  
STANDARDS, SOFTEN YOUR  
VALUES, OR REDUCE TOO MUCH  
FRICTION.**

”



In your desire to see your community grow don't lower your standards, soften your values, or reduce too much friction.

**A fair barrier of entry (e.g. applying to join) and effort exercised on behalf of new members can contribute to a sense of ownership and is part of what makes the magic of community.**



“

**MAKE A POINT TO MAKE  
MEANINGFUL COMMENTS, ASK  
OPEN QUESTIONS OR SEND A  
PERSONAL THANK YOU NOTE FOR  
GREAT COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS.**

”



**Good community managers are connected with their communities and their community members.** This is a two-way connection that happens through authentic engagement.

Sometimes this is hard to do given all the other priorities in your day. Try blocking time during the day to scan posts in your community with engagement in mind. Put it on your calendar so you don't forget. Pour a cup of coffee or tea and put on some music to set the mood for meaningful conversation. Make a point to make meaningful comments, ask open questions, or send a personal thank you note for great community interactions. If you keep doing this for a few minutes every day, it will naturally become part of how you engage with your community.

Your actions will help others to feel appreciated and will set the standard for positive interactions.



“

**I TRY NEVER TO TURN DOWN MEETINGS... I NEVER KNOW WHAT I WILL LEARN, AND HOW THAT MIGHT BE VALUABLE IN THE FUTURE.**

”



As a community lead, I often get people reaching out to me when they don't know where to turn for an answer, advice, guidance, or connections.

**Sometimes they want to meet with me, but their goal for the meeting is unclear. Nevertheless, I try never to turn down those meetings.**

The reason is that I never know what I will learn, and how that might be valuable in the future. \*Many\* times I have taken a meeting whose value was not returned until weeks, months, or even years later--when the connection we formed in that short discussion becomes useful.



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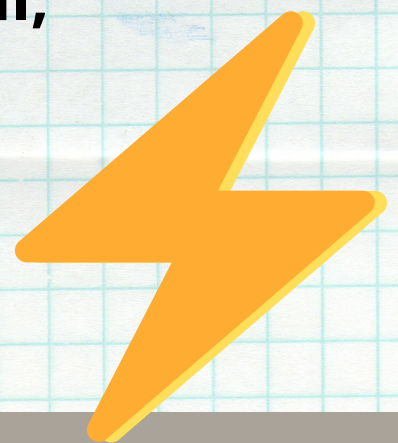
**THERE IS A LOT OF POWER IN  
THE SPARK AND PASSION  
THAT MOTIVATES OUR  
CUSTOMERS TO LEAD  
COMMUNITIES.**

”



There is a lot of power in the spark and passion that motivates our customers to lead communities.

**Make sure you harness that passion by helping them develop their spark into something real, authentic, and valuable.**





“

**TAKE GREAT CARE OF  
NEW MEMBERS OF  
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

”



Take great care of new members of your Community. They are assessing whether they want to commit further and engage. They are looking at what is already on the Community, the tone of the engagement.

**Give them extra care to ensure they are assured that your community is a safe space to be.**

They need to hear from the Community leaders a form of acceptance in the circle.



“

**AS A COMMUNITY  
MANAGER, YOU  
SHOULD BE  
PERSISTENT AND  
NEVER GIVE UP.**

”



In my experience **getting people to engage in a community has always been difficult** and especially in the start-up phase - but as a community manager, you should be persistent and never give up.

Be active, get to know your members, and include them in everything you do and you'll end up with a solid community people can turn to whenever they need advice, share successes, and more.



“

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO  
TRY SOMETHING NEW  
OUT IN YOUR ONLINE  
COMMUNITY.**

”



Don't be afraid to try something new out in your online community.

**You will learn the most through trial and error!**

All audiences are different, so it's really hard to know what will work for any specific community, and the best thing you can do is try it out. If it is not successful, be transparent about it and stop doing things that do not work then focus your efforts on those that do.



## ADVICE ON SELF-CARE

@JUMPINGTRACI  
#CMGRADVICE



**KEEP PARTS  
OF YOUR LIFE  
TO YOURSELF.**

I'm an active member of the program I manage and one of the things that has kept me sane in the 8+ years working on this program is that I keep parts of my life to myself.

I don't connect with community members on Facebook, I don't troubleshoot on my personal accounts:

**I draw the line so I can be the best version of me possible when I am at work.**



# ADVICE ON SELF-CARE

#CMGRADVICE



LINH LI

**SPEND TIME OFF THE  
CLOCK TO ANALYZE  
AND IDENTIFY THE WHY  
BEHIND YOUR JOB-  
RELATED STRESS.**

Spend time off the clock to analyze and identify the why behind your job-related stress.

**If you can pinpoint what it is that stresses you out, it is very likely that you have already been putting together a solution for it.**



## ADVICE ON SELF-CARE

@KSCHOTTPHOTOI  
#CMGRADVICE



SOMETIMES WE  
JUST NEED  
THOSE LITTLE  
VICTORIES.

I think a lot about a piece of advice I got around feeling overwhelmed by projects. I was told that you'll always find things to do or tasks to put on a to-do list, but you can't physically do all of them. **Prioritize, edit, and be realistic about your task list, and goals will feel much more reachable.**

I also love lists, so I break these larger task lists down into little details, so I can physically see each aspect of a project is accomplished. Sometimes we just need those little victories.



# ADVICE ON SELF-CARE

@OLIVERBEIRNE  
#CMGRADVICE

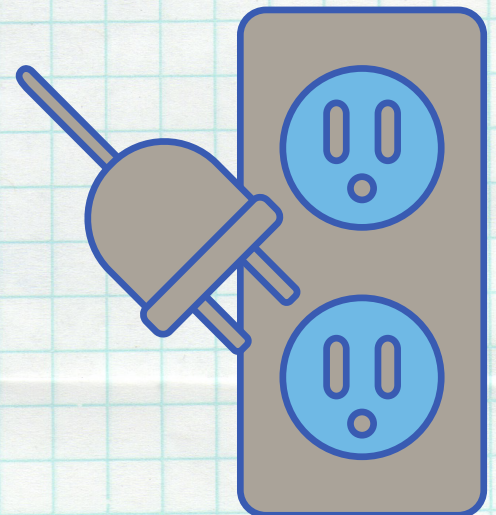


**YOUR COMMUNITY IS  
BEST SERVED BY YOU  
LOOKING AFTER  
YOURSELF.**

Look after yourself!

**Take your leave, and  
properly disconnect when  
not at work.**

Your community is best served  
by you looking after yourself.

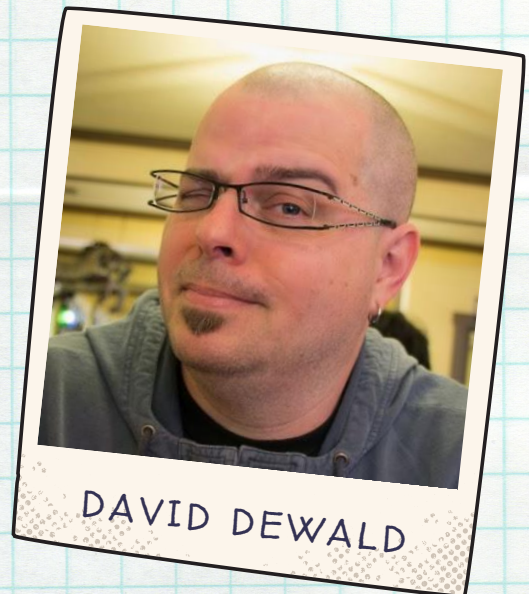




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**MAKE TIME TO  
CELEBRATE THE BEST  
OF YOUR  
COMMUNITIES.**

”



Recently there has been a lot of focus on the worst of Online Communities. Always remember to make time to celebrate the best of your Communities.

**Nothing will do better for your community ecology than to shine a light on those who exemplify the kind of community members you wish to have.**



“

**DON'T BEND SO FAR  
THAT YOU BECOME  
SOMEONE ELSE.**

”



**The one lesson that resonates with me time and again is this - be yourself.**

Community professionals are really good at bending their personalities to fit and while this is admirable, being yourself is what makes you the best community professional.

Don't bend so far that you become someone else. I've tried it - trust me, it's not a good look and often leads to unhappiness. Instead, remember the best thing you're bringing to the proverbial table is yourself and the relationships you develop by simply being you.

Always be you and the rest will follow.



“

IT'S OK TO HAVE ABSURD  
EXPECTATIONS, MAKE TO-DO LISTS,  
AND EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES BUT  
YOU KNOW YOU WILL ENCOUNTER  
SETBACKS.

- BOB GOFF

”



I'm passing on some advice from Bob Goff's  
Dream Big Framework:

**"Expect setbacks.** It's ok to have absurd expectations, make to-do lists, and explore opportunities but you know you will encounter setbacks. Don't be surprised when they happen. Instead, lean into them. Always moving forward. It isn't fun, but it works...It takes courage to look in the mirror and clear the path."



“

**ASK FOR HELP.  
YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE. I  
MEAN, YOU CAN, BUT IT'S  
DEFINITELY NOT  
SUSTAINABLE.**

”



Ask for help. You can't do it alone. I mean, you can, but it's definitely not sustainable.

If that help is internal, in the form of additional resources, managers, colleagues, or peers from other companies (like those of us in TheCR Network) **sharing the load and relying on other trusted voices will make your life and job easier, even during the most difficult times.**



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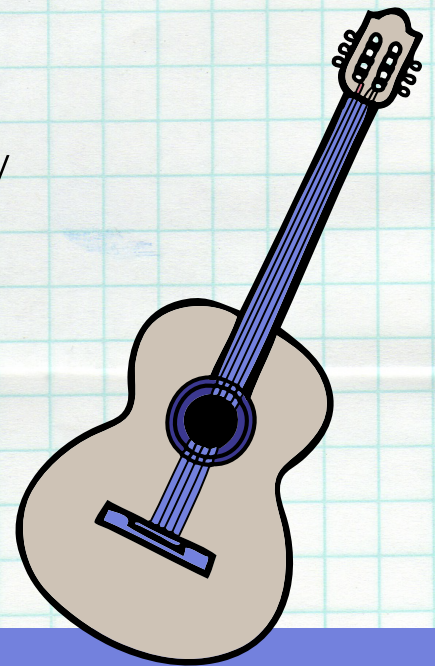
**THE BUSIER (AND  
MESSIER) MY HANDS ARE,  
THE LESS LIKELY I AM TO  
BE DOOM-SCROLLING.**

”



Try an analog hobby--baking, gardening, playing guitar, knitting. Bonus points if it's a messy hobby. The busier (and messier) my hands are, the less likely I am to be doom-scrolling.

Sinking into an analog hobby without any particular goals, metrics, or worries has been an immense boost to my resilience this year.





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