



10 Key Questions & 5 Powerful Rules for Life Science Marketers when Building an Online Community

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Abstract

Online communities can be a powerful tool for life science marketers. Branded communities around a particular field can build or strengthen a company's reputation as a leader within that field. However, building a community that is ultimately successful is a difficult task. The internet is riddled with examples of sponsored online communities that are inactive and never fulfilled their goal of growing a strong base of active users while providing value for the company. In this paper, we will discuss 10 key questions that life science tools companies should answer prior to undertaking the formation of an online community and also provide 5 powerful rules that companies should follow when building and managing such communities. Life science marketers who answer these questions and follow these rules will greatly increase their chances of building a thriving online community that creates value for both the users and their company.

10 Key Questions That Should be Asked Prior to Building an Online Community

~ Question One ~

Who will our target audience consist of?

Before you do anything, you need to define the audience. As a general rule, you want the audience to be specific. The more targeted the audience is, the easier you'll be able to recruit them to the site and provide unique value to them. If your desired audience is too broad or you cannot segment life scientists to form a targeted audience, you may want to reconsider developing a community site.

~ Question Two ~

Is our audience large enough to sustain a community?

Try to be realistic and take a guess at what percentage of your audience will actually sign up for or use your online community (hint: you're probably overestimating). Next, think about how much user activity will be required to maintain and grow your community. Given the size of your audience and those estimates, is your target audience actually large enough? Depending on the value your community will offer, even an audience of 10,000+ may not be large enough.

~ Question Three ~

What benefit will the community provide to users?

In order to persuade scientists to participate in your online community you will need to provide a benefit. Think of your scientist audience as potential customers of your community site. The "price" of participating in your online community is time and you need to convince them that the "product" (your community) is worth the price.

~ Question Four ~

Is this benefit sufficiently unique?

This is arguably the most important question and one that most companies do not sufficiently consider. Facebook, for example, can be viewed as having a lot of value, but creating a "Facebook for scientists" would almost certainly result in failure. There already is a Facebook, it has lots of users, and scientists don't have a need for another because it would cost them time while providing no additional benefit. If there's something else out there that does what you want your online community to do and targets the same audience (or is inclusive of your audience), you need to either add valuable, differentiating functionality or rethink your approach.

The full paper can be requested free of charge at:

<http://biobm.com/idea-farm/reports-papers/>



About the Authors

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About BioBM Consulting™

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