

A photograph of two women sitting on the floor, looking at a smartphone together. The woman on the left has short, curly blonde hair and is wearing a light-colored blazer. The woman on the right has dark hair pulled back and is wearing a white and blue sports jersey with red accents. They are both smiling and looking down at the phone. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**— HOW TO  
CREATE VALUE  
WITH BRAND  
COMMUNITIES**

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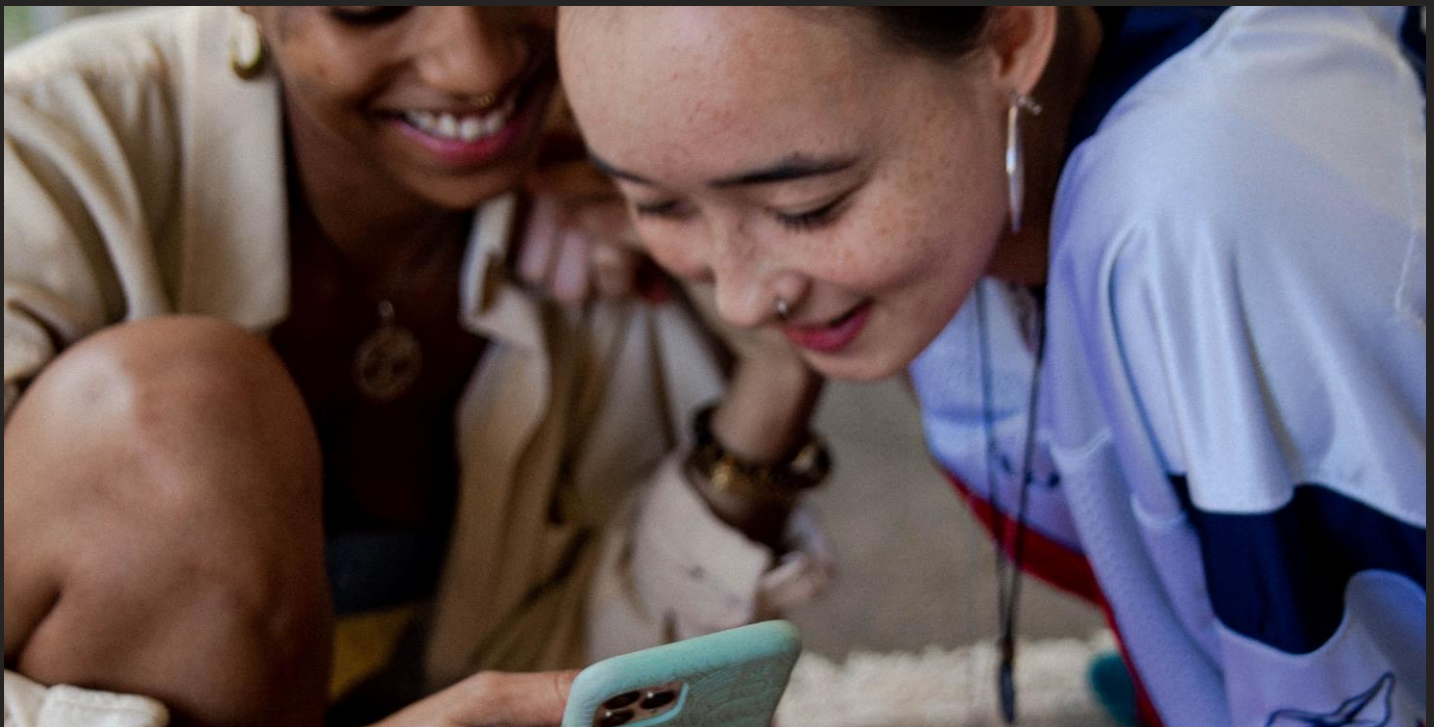
# — INTRODUCTION

What every brand should have to sell and continue selling in the long term? **Being memorable.** Get into the minds of consumers and be the first answer that pops out when there is a need.

To be memorable you need to trigger an emotion. This is what makes the difference between a brand and a love brand. The former only provides an impeccable product or service; the latter also knows how to arouse emotions in those who experience it. Fun, empathy, exhilaration or cheerfulness: when we experience a feeling, it is harder to forget how and why we felt it. What happens next? We want to share it!

We need to tell friends and family about it, hoping they will want to try it too. This is how a community is born. And this is where a love brand should expand its knowledge and increase its investment. Building a community of consumers brings many benefits that are key to long-term growth, and to the creation of new products, and is the most authentic form of advertising that exists.

In this eBook, we will look together at **why you should create a community of brand ambassadors and how to do it.** We will unveil the most sought-after solutions and do so through successful case studies. Ready? Let's go!





# — BRAND COMMUNITIES: THE BASICS

# WHAT IS A BRAND COMMUNITY?

How do I know if my brand has already a community? Are my followers on Instagram a community? What are the measurement criteria to identify and define a successful brand community? Do I have true brand lovers?

These are some of the questions that marketers ask us during consultancy meetings. Having or not having a community does not revolve around a social media profile. It goes through many factors, a chain of factors:

**Emotions, loyalty and sharing.**

A brand community is distinguished from X number of consumers by their purchase, their interaction consistency, the way they can talk about your brand to others... A community can exist within a social media platform - but the number of followers is not enough, (you need to measure their engagement!), or it can be gathered on a platform created on purpose by the brand, or even offline with e.g. live events.

What differentiates a community from consumers is the love for your brand and the ways in which it manifests itself.



# WHY BRANDS SHOULD CARE \_\_\_\_ ABOUT COMMUNITIES?

There is a "chain of events" that links the community members: emotions, loyalty, and sharing. It is important to realize that in the present day, forms of aggregation (especially online) are essential. If your brand does not have a community, your competitors probably do. And your target group may belong, at some point, to their programmes.

Your brand is not just a product or a set of services. It expresses **an identity with which consumers can identify**. Hereafter are some reasons why every brand should build a community:

1. It is easier to communicate with those who feel part of your brand than with those who casually buy from you.
2. Feeling part of a community increases trust in the brand and loyalty to it.
3. Brand communities no longer have consumers, but ambassadors that take part in conversations about them.
4. Brand lovers are more inclined to share their love with friends and help you out.
5. The best way to develop or improve an item of the Marketing mix (e.g. product) is to directly ask community members.



# WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL \_\_\_\_ COMPONENTS?

Whether your community lives on social media, on a dedicated platform or offline, it does not matter. There are some essential elements to always take into account:

**IDENTITY:** A community cannot be called such if members do not have something in common. Do not try to bring in as many people as possible, but focus on attracting those who truly reflect your target group.

**COMMUNICATION:** Communities are often differentiated by language style and tone used. Sometimes they have special terms for those who join, or recognizable ways of greeting, or use a particular slang.

**EMOTIONS:** Members experience things that they want to share. Whether it is the unique feeling of being welcomed, or the enjoyment provided by the exclusive services, or the pride in participating in certain activities... Trigger emotions!

**APPRECIATION:** Make them always feel special, especially the most engaged ones. The feeling of belonging depends on it. Value your members, make them shine!

**REWARDS:** A little healthy competition fuels the fun. Gamification mechanisms within communities are key to thrill members, to have something to talk about outside the community, and come back.





# — HOW TO BUILD A BRAND COMMUNITY



# 1. PLACE THE BRAND — AT THE CENTER

Everything within the brand community should remember your brand, talk about your brand, and live with your brand. From the tone of voice to the design to the UX experience (if it is a dedicated platform). The community only exists because of your brand.

## **BE SURE YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE:**

Of course, it will be crucial that you have clear goals, know your mission, what's your brand personality, as well as your values. Anyone signing up should understand them quickly.

Having clear coordinates on your target audience will ensure that you only attract people who will turn out to be brand lovers. Do not forget that the peer-to-peer recommendations drive product sales more than any advertising or marketing campaign. So, stimulate them!

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**89%** trust recommendations  
from people they know (Nielsen, 2021)



# 2. CHOOSE THE — RIGHT CHANNELS

Where will your brand lovers meet on a regular basis? What is the home of your brand community? There are a few options to be considered:

**SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES:** There are groups that live entirely on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch... But what are the (dis)advantages?

**PROS:** It is easier to create engagement and to reach other possible brand lovers. Plus, you can receive and share user-generated content in a couple of clicks.

**CONS:** You are quite limited in terms of member data and insights. Also, when it comes to data, you don't own a thing – e.g., If your account is suspended or has a technical problem, you lose it all.

## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT?

What would happen if social media disappear today? The more data you own, the better you will be able to connect with your consumers and brand lovers.





**EMAILING LISTS AND MESSENGER GROUPS:** You could have members joining your community via e.g. a form on your website. Your communication would be then through newsletters or conversational content (for instance, Telegram or WhatsApp).

**PROS:** You would own basic data such as the personal email address. Your communication is more personalized thanks to newsletters and 1:1 looking emails. Community members can interact with each other more easily through messenger groups.

**CONS:** If engagement is through the group (private), it may be more difficult to achieve the same result as on social media where it's easily all public.

**DEDICATED PLATFORM:** Using a tailored-made tool to bring community members together, communicate to and with them, make them interact, collect their content, take care of their data with policies... that can be a simple stand-alone platform or fully integrated on the brand website.

**PROS:** It is the most complete and unique way to create a community and make it grow. It's easy to track and store all insights and data. You can manage every aspect, connect everything to the brand ecosystem, including its social accounts.

**CONS:** It requires a long term vision with annual planning of activities and higher budgets including technical investments with IT services being involved. More sophisticated at every level!

# 3. ENGAGE AND — INSPIRE MEMBERS

Regardless of the channel you choose, it is very important that your brand community is an inspiration and remains attractive to both registrants and target groups. Indeed, acquisition being quite tricky and sometimes expensive, retention will be key.

**DRIVE ENGAGEMENT:** Keeping your community members engaged is therefore a big priority. How? Play with the **4Es: Educate, Explain, Entertain, and Empower**. They need to enjoy practical value, live exclusive experiences, be able to share their emotions. You can do this, for example, through an ambassador program with a gamification system, in which there is a reward after a certain number of actions are performed.

**BOOST UGC:** With strong engagement, people are driven to share with others what makes them feel so special. Hence, the production and publication of content about the brand (User Generated Content) is spontaneous and flourishing. The brand must take care of the re-sharing and celebration of this – so valuable – content.



## **ENSURE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT EVERYDAY:**

Your members need to be heard. It must be easy to express their opinion and communicate with your brand. Actually, humanize this dialogue by creating avatars or characters that will be their key contacts and touchpoints on the platform. That will increase trust. You might be surprised at the volume of insights they are ready to give you!

A photograph of three young women lying down, their heads resting on a light-colored, textured surface. They are looking directly at the camera with neutral expressions. The woman on the left has long dark hair and blue eyes. The woman in the middle has dark hair and dark eyes. The woman on the right has long dark hair and blue eyes. The text 'TERRITORY WHITELABEL SOLUTION' is overlaid in the center in a bold, white, sans-serif font. A short orange horizontal line is positioned to the left of the word 'TERRITORY'.

**TERRITORY**  
**WHITELABEL**  
**SOLUTION**

# YOUR OWN BRAND COMMUNITY!

Build your brand community with a yearly influencer program, 100% tailored to your marketing needs. At Territory, we put our **17-year expertise and technology** in a whitelabel solution that can be hosted on your (CRM) website or a new platform. Your data, your brand ambassadors – managed daily by our project managers!



## 24 PLATFORMS

created to host & manage brand ambassador communities in white-label across Europe.

## 170 EXPERTS

from marketing, tech, design, project management, copywriting... to run your advocacy strategy

## 11 LANGUAGES

for international scopes:  
EN | DE | FR | ES | IT | PT |  
NL | HU | PL | CZ | RO

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### MARKETING GOALS YOU CAN ACHIEVE:

- Build an engaged community of brand lovers
- Recruit new clients and build loyalty to your brand
- Educate consumers about your product & innovations
- Increase brand awareness and visibility on and offline
- Drive product trials, traffic in (e-)stores, and thus sales
- Collect feedback, insights, and co-create your managing mix
- Acquire consumer data for your CRM & knowledge base

# 4 PILLARS FOR A \_\_\_\_ SUCCESSFUL PLAN



## 1. DATA & TECHNOLOGY

From set-up to daily management, we use our in-house technology to execute your advocacy strategy while ensuring a high-level of security for your data. We provide a seamless platform connection to your website with a consistent brand look and feel for the visitors, as well as a customized user-journey and domain name.

There will be a members-only login area as central information hub. Options are: Single Sign-On (SSO) option for more convenience, and automatic data exchange to feed your CRM or DMP. Of course, we have high IT standards and our processes are GDPR-compliant.

## 2. INFLUENCER CAMPAIGNS

We design an annual plan based on our wide range of solutions, channels, and influencer typologies to achieve your marketing goals effectively: Social Media Influencer Campaigns, Online Product Ratings & Reviews, Offline Word of Mouth Marketing, Product Sampling & Coupling, Market Research & Co-Creation... [Know more](#)



# 4 PILLARS FOR A \_\_\_\_ SUCCESSFUL PLAN

## 3. CONTENT & LOYALTY

To ensure the quality of your influencer selection, maximize your marketing KPI and improve SEO, we engage your community throughout the year with custom editorial line of content published on a blog. This can include ambassador challenges or even social media contests. Quickpolls and ad-hoc surveys about your products & brand(s) are also great tools. We send weekly emails to drive traffic and actions. We dialogue through answers to emails and comments.



## 4. ACQUISITION & MEDIA MIX

To build but also to grow the community database, we offer different types of solutions. For instance, campaigns on our own platforms: TRND (unpaid influencers) and InCircles (paid creators). Membership strategy with gamification mechanics. Also, digital advertising as social ads.

To leverage on the advocacy program, including influencer content and insights, we can help you to humanize your social media accounts. To enrich your brand newsletters, web and CRM activities. In general, we support you when it comes to maximize your in- and out-store assets.



A man is sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room, working on a laptop and a tablet. The room is illuminated by a warm, glowing lamp and light from a window showing a building facade. The man is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt with a black and white checkered pattern on the sleeve. The text 'CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters across the middle of the image.

# — CASE STUDIES FOR INSPIRATION

# NESTLÉ CLUB IN FRANCE



The Nestlé group, which set up a multi-brand relationship program called "Nestlé Croquons la vie" has, in 2016, sought to further develop consumer engagement with the brand. The main reason? *"We observe that consumers trust their peers more and express a need for transparency & authenticity,"* said Véronique Parisot, CRM Manager at Nestlé France.

**HUMANIZE THE CRM ACTIVITIES**

**CONNECT BRANDS WITH CONSUMERS**

The food group has therefore deployed an Ambassadors club, that is a tab integrated to its CRM platform, with two pillars: product testing campaigns and a blog to discuss with consumers about their interests.

In 6 years, 50 campaigns were conducted in total. *"The consumer signs up and fills out a form."* explains the CRM manager. *"We then select on average 2,000 people per campaign."* With success: more than 98,000 community members were activated, generating around **16Mio offline reach** and **55Mio online reach** through **530K user-generated content**. And, the business follows: as of the first year, for one euro invested, the brands have generated **2 to 3 euros of ROI per campaign (IRI)**. Some brands like Hépar even outperformed with a measured ROI of 7.6€ during the campaign.

## HIGHLIGHT

**153k**

Community members

**50**

Advocacy campaigns

# DELHAIZE CLUB IN BELGIUM



Delhaize is a Belgian supermarket chain with a strong private label. Partner during 5 years, Territory created and animated the Delhaize ambassadors club in **two different languages** for the Belgian market: French and Dutch.

**STRONG ON-GOING PROGRAMME**

**DIVERSE ACTIVATIONS INCLUDING CSR**



From 2015 to 2020, more than **40,000 highly engaged community members** were gathered on a stand-alone platform – that is dedicated to the community activities like a VIP club. It contained multiple areas that were daily ran by our community managers. New articles and contests or surveys were published each week to engage the Delhaize shoppers.

## HIGHLIGHT

**40k**

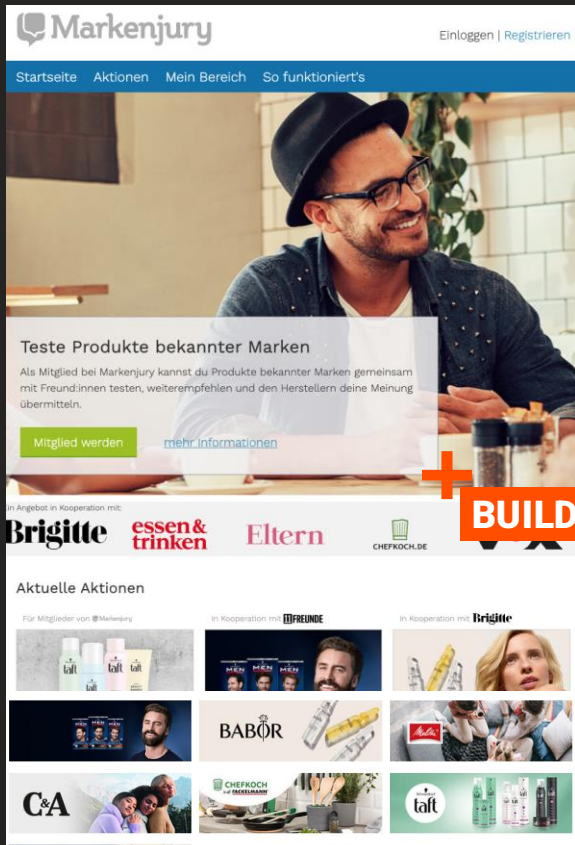
Community members

**20**

Advocacy campaigns

To pace the life of the Delhaize community and achieve its key marketing objectives, **20 big brand campaigns** and numerous micro activations on the blog were implemented. The marketing objectives were usually to develop awareness of its product innovations, increase the visibility of exclusive brands, leverage the content for their media, recruit new shoppers with targeted trials, generate traffic in Belgium stores, as well as to collect consumer insights. In short, **create strong brand preference for not only the brand, but the retailer and its partners.**

# MARKENJURY IN GERMANY



We helped one of the biggest media houses in Germany to build MARKENJURY, a **brand community built of readers** and other fans of the Gruner & Jahr media brands.

Through quality collaborations with some of the most famous brands, like L'Oréal, Ferrero, Philips, Google, Melitta, Savencia, we have acquired more than **120,000 members** with over **100 successful campaigns**.

## BUILD A CUSTOMER CENTRIC APPROACH

Branded campaigns are launched regularly on MARKENJURY, and community members can then sign up and participate in those. **Members are nano influencers who act as multipliers**, talk about the product and create attention. To ensure the high quality of the campaign and the results, nano influencers go through a close selection process.

Our technology works tirelessly but also invisibly: the platform has its own look and feel that is well recognized by active profiles of the community. A big highlight of this case is that the client is able to **promote the community through its media** (magazines, TV, etc.). Then, as in any white-label solution, it is the **activation of the Word of Mouth** among the brand ambassadors that plays a key role in the success of the platform.

### HIGHLIGHT

# 120k

Community members

# +100

Advocacy campaigns



**“** *TERRITORY offers consumer brands an all-in-one platform for building influencer communities to drive sustainable growth in consumer-centric environments through D2C activations on scale.*

**Dustin Bartels**

Product Director at TERRITORY

# YOUR BRAND COMMUNITY CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to get started or improve your brand community. Feel free to share it with other marketing professionals to see what they think!



- HAVE CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND STATE CLEARLY YOUR VALUES & MISSION**
- MAKE IT EASY AND FAST TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE COMMUNITY**
- OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, SO DIALOGUE IS EASED AT ALL TIMES**
- TAKE ALL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENCOURAGE CONTENT GENERATION & SHARING ON THE PLATFORM AND SOCIAL MEDIA**
- FIND ONLINE AND/OR OFFLINE WAYS TO CONNECT EMOTIONALLY AND REGULARLY WITH YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS**
- OFFER EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES AND REWARD THE MOST ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS**
- MAKE THEM CONTRIBUTE TO THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY AND YOUR BRAND**

# CONCLUSIONS

**Emotional connection and brand loyalty are what distinguish consumers from brand lovers.** Every brand should invest time & money in building a community, because of the marketing benefits it provides in both the short & long term.

A brand with a strong community no longer has to spend all its energy talking about itself. Others will take care of it. Less pressure for content marketing.

Our brand values only exist if someone else shares and practices it. And, your consumers want to do it, and above all

they know how to do it! What you have to do is simply create a place for it.

*“Today, no company should be without its own community. Brand communities allow brands to directly address their most loyal fans and generate positive word-of-mouth effects. Besides sales support, the community can do much more e.g. serve as an excellent market research tool, generating then valuable content and insights on an ongoing basis.”* **concluded Stefan Schumacher, Managing Director at TERRITORY.**



# THANK YOU FOR READING



## TERRITORY\_\_INFLUENCE

is the leading full-service Influencer Marketing partner in Europe. Part of Bertelsmann Group, the agency has a strong offline & online expertise with more than 3,600 campaigns over the past 17 years. Its mission is to place humans at the core of marketing strategies by always providing the best solutions for brands to collaborate with relevant influencers (Nano, Micro, Macro & Stars) and generate a real business impact. With its own platforms (TRND & InCircles) or white label solution, it sets no limits for its clients – such as P&G, Nestlé, Beiersdorf, L'OREAL, Philips...

► [Know more](#)