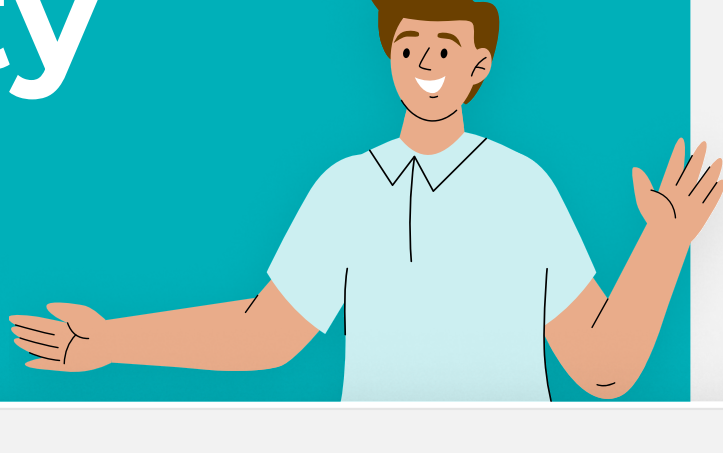


# 5 steps to build an online community

Boost member engagement and retention at your association

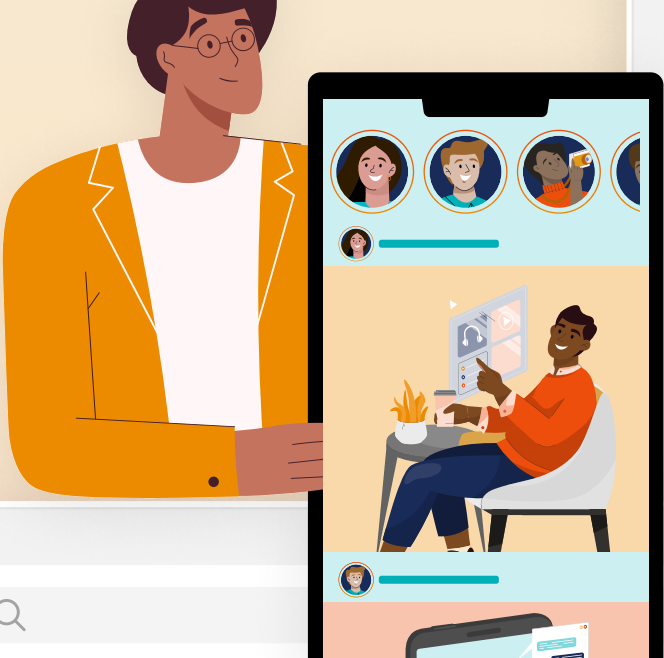


## INTRODUCTION

**Is your association looking for ways to boost member value and drive loyalty? It's time to invest in an online member community.**

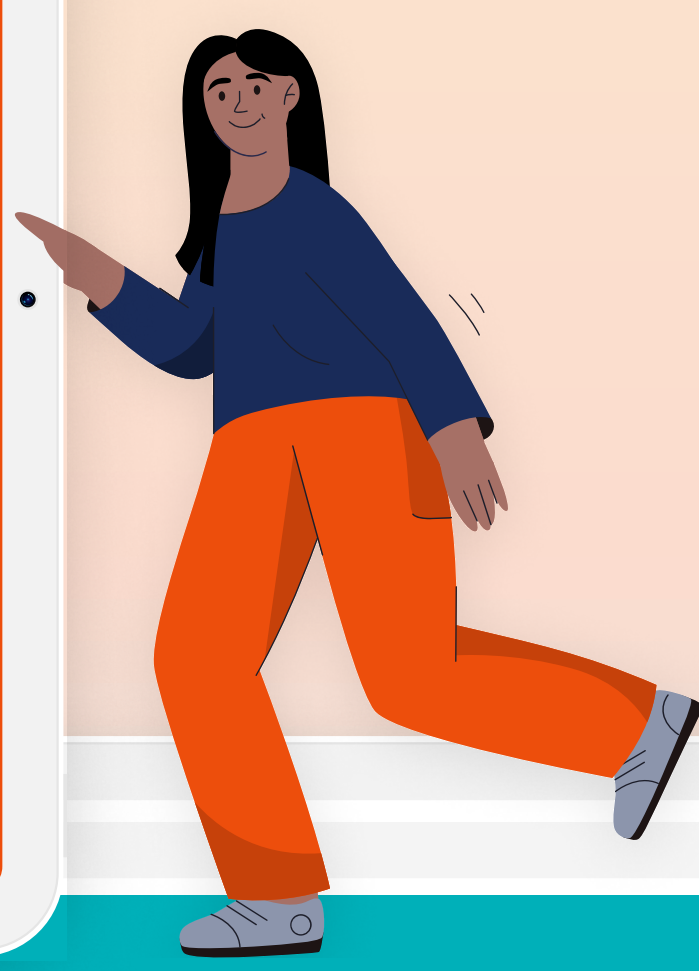
The Community Brands 2023 Association Trends Study discovered that approximately half of members have used their organization's online community, and those who use it are significantly more loyal to the organization. When you increase member usage of your online community, you'll also build member loyalty.

Read on for five steps to create an online community, personalize member journeys, and increase member engagement.



# 5 steps to create a trailblazing online community

Are you ready to drive member retention and loyalty at your association? Follow these tips to leverage your online community and personalize member journeys:



## Step 1: Develop goals

Community Brands research found that 51% of members rely on their professional organization for networking, collaboration, sharing ideas, and participating in a professional community.

As you begin creating your online community, you'll want to set actionable goals. Do you want to boost member recruitment, enhance collaboration, or streamline member services?

Consider what your members want in an online community. Recruit a core group of members to become early adopters of the online community and gather their feedback.



## Step 2: Define success metrics

Of the 47% of members who report using their organization's online community, there are higher loyalty metrics. The members also report a stronger sense of community versus those who don't use the online community.

Establish success metrics to determine how well you're tracking toward your goals. Consider metrics around:

- Acquisition and retention rates
- Satisfaction ratings
- Engagement from a particular member demographic
- Number of logins, page views, file uploads, and discussion posts
- Participation in events, learning programs, or career services
- Involvement in advocacy efforts, volunteer programs, or ambassador work



## Step 3: Create a plan

Decide who will be on your online community team, including a mix of staff from across your association. Invite a board member to join the team, and include your early online community adopter members. Be sure to define roles and responsibilities for each team member.

Map out the member journey in your online community to foster long-term member engagement by continuously driving members to join and explore the community through personalized actions. Detail your online community rollout, including teaser communications to let members know the community is coming.

Once your online community is active, entice members to visit by creating a content calendar that includes a steady stream of useful content like industry news, career advancement resources, or thought leadership topics.



## Step 4: Select online community technology

Look for an online community vendor that supports your association's key goals and boosts member engagement through personalized experiences.

You'll want to leverage an online community that is built into your association management software to ensure you can do the following:

- Shape individual member journeys with personalized content feeds
- Promote engagement through gamification with profile badges and missions
- Boost retention with tailored content and discussions for specific audiences
- Attract young professionals through a fresh, mobile experience



## Step 5: Launch your online community

Celebrate the launch of your online community and let members know the platform is live.

Consider hosting an event to promote your online community, helping members log into the platform and begin networking.

Ask your early adopter members to start posting in the online community and use gamification badges as rewards for participation. Build online community sub-groups based on member interests, professional backgrounds, and more to boost engagement opportunities and encourage networking. Leverage personalized content feeds to keep members invested in your online community and returning to the platform.



## Learn more about online communities

Are you ready to boost member value and drive loyalty? Leverage your online community to enhance member engagement and retention.

Nimble Communities unifies the world's best community platform, Salesforce Experience Cloud, with leading member benefits to deliver the most powerful online community. When you connect association members to Nimble Communities, you'll drive engagement and loyalty throughout the entire member journey.

[Learn more about Nimble Communities](#)

Nimble AMS offers leverage-leading technology designed to empower staff and deliver a superior member experience. Built entirely on the Salesforce platform, Nimble AMS will help you easily manage every aspect of your enterprise association. Expect continuous upgrades, AI and predictive analytics, robust reporting and dashboards, and online communities to advance your association.