

The Online Community Conceptualization Framework

	Decision to make	How to decide	Implications
What will the community be about	Decide the broad topic of the community. This should be a strong common interest that unites the audience.	Use the MTER framework (money, time, emotionally provocative, or representative of an identity)	Build the community around a very narrow and strong interest. Deliberately exclude anything that doesn't fit this interest.
Who are we going to approach?	Decide which segments to exclude from your initial focus. Target as homogenous group as possible to get the community off the ground. The more niche the better.	Review audience demographics, habits, or psychographics. Use at least two qualifiers. A community for {x} whom {y}.	Exclude the majority to get the minority you can reach. Focus on targeting a small sliver of the target audience and expand gradually. Build a list of 50 to 150 prospective members.
What type of community will this be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community of action • Community of circumstance • Community of interest • Community of place • Community of practice 	Competitive analysis. This should be the only community of its kind.	Each community types changes the balance of discussions, activities, and content in a community. Action on milestone, circumstance on support, interest in bonding/depth of passion, place on local issues, practice on domain of knowledge.
What is the purpose of the community?	Decide a goal for the community to strive towards.	Ask members about their aspirations, goals, or challenges. Use this as a collective purpose.	Use in marketing messages, registration messages, and throughout the community to unite the audience and drive activity.
What will happen in the community?	Decide which activities, discussions, or content will take place in the community.	Review existing audience habits. What do members do already online? Repeat this in your community.	Forms the basis of your action plan. Incorporate existing habits instead of forcing new habit upon members.