

How to Improve Your Blog Community

Welcome to this free guide by blog consultant [Easton Ellsworth at Visionary Blogging](#) on how to strengthen your blog's community. Please see my other [blog improvement guides](#) as well. If you like this guide, please consider using my [professional blog consulting services](#).



Want to make your blog community (or [blog tribe](#)) bigger and stronger? Next to content and design, community is paramount to a blog's success. Here's a brief guide on how to build and strengthen your blog's community.

What is a blog community?

Your blog community is the group of people who share a common awareness and sense of belonging regarding your blog's content. They have a common culture that evolves and revolves around your blog.

A community always has the following in some form:

- Shared items, ideas and/or symbols
- Meetings
- Rules, rewards and punishments
- Rituals and/or routines

Every blog has a community, even if it's just a community of one (you).

So, whether you like it or not, as a blogger, you're also a community leader and organizer.

Why is community important to blogging?

As [Connie Bensen](#) will tell you, developing a passionate online following is helpful - and perhaps even critical - to corporate branding. The more people there are that go on the Web and talk positively about you and your company, the better.

And blogs are a healthy part of almost any business's approach to marketing and branding online.

Also, because everything affects everything else, an improvement in your blog's content will result in an improvement in its community, and vice versa. The same goes for blog design, search engine optimization (blog SEO), blog traffic and other considerations.



How do you measure blog community growth?

There are several key metrics you should consider when attempting to measure the size and vibrance of your blog's community. Among them:

1. Unique visitors to your blog
2. Total page views at your blog
3. RSS feed or email subscribers to your blog posts
4. Subscribers to any blog-related newsletters or autoresponders
5. The number of comments published on your blog posts
6. The number of *people* publishing comments on your blog
7. The word count of comments published at your blog
8. The number of new incoming links (backlinks) to your blog
9. The rate of change of all of the above metrics on a regular basis (e.g. monthly)
10. All of the above metrics (including #9) for other blogs in your niche/industry

Metrics #9 and #10 are "meta-metrics" - that is, they have to do with comparisons of other metrics over time or between different blogs.



How can you build your blog's community?

Step 1: Create an object worthy of adoration. This could be a piece of [killer flagship content](#), a [cornerstone product](#), a [catchy meme](#), a stream of thematically consistent content, or anything that people can look at, talk about and admire. The more viral the nature of the object, the more likely your community will grow quickly. Without a center, communities must implode. This object is your community center.

Step 2: Ask people to use the object. You can approach them yourself or invite them to come see/try it (via [blog commenting](#), for example). Be simple, clear and direct in your invitations. When people use what you've created, they become students of you and your ways.

Part of asking people to use the object is to let them catch you in the act of using it yourself. The more frequently and forcefully you meet with your students around the central object of adoration, the more opportunities they have to converse with you and each other about it.

Step 3: Ask people to share the object. This makes them teachers of you and your ways. They spread your community for you. They leave your blog, discuss your central object with others, and return with friends and associates in tow. You now have an inner ring of master teachers and an outer ring of new students. Your growth potential increases.

Step 4: Reward people for using and sharing the object. Praise them. Spend time with them. Give them tangible or intangible gifts. Serve them. Touch them online or offline. The more faithfully they partake of and promote your core offering, the more lavishly you should slather your attention and appreciation on them. This will fan the flames of community passion all the more.

The corollary to rewarding desirable behavior is punishing or refusing to reward undesirable behavior. Make sure people know which ways of using and sharing your object please you the most and which ways bother you.

Step 5: Constantly repeat steps 1-4. Otherwise growth will slow and eventually turn into shrinkage. This is why the blogs that publish regularly tend to build much larger subscriber bases and generate much more traffic than those that publish sporadically.



What if you're stuck in your blog community building efforts?

Getting stuck in the community-building mud is no fun. Many people abandon their blogs in large part because they're frustrated that no one seems to be joining their community.

If you're worried about your blog community growth faltering, don't panic.

While the forms of community failure vary widely, the root causes of blog community stagnation are almost always the same. They are directly tied to five growth steps above.

Try to answer these questions:

1. Have you created an object worthy of adoration? (See Step 1 above.)
2. Have you asked people to use the object? (See Step 2 above.)
3. Have you asked people to share the object? (See Step 3 above.)
4. Do you reward people for using and sharing the object? (See Step 4 above.)
5. Do you do all of the above constantly? (See Step 5 above.)

Ask your existing community for help and feedback. What do they really want from you, their leader?

Finally, what do you really want? What's your [vision for your blog](#)?

You can always [ask me for help](#), too.



Blog Community Tips: Further Reading

[27 Blogging Secrets to Power Your Community](#) by Chris Brogan - I've gotta glean more info from this post and its long thread (177 comments and counting). (See also [25 Ways to Build Your Community](#).)

[8 Steps to Growing Your Blog Community One Person At a Time](#) by Ben Yoskovitz - Another fine article with a long comment thread (nearly 200 comments). Ben's central argument here is that community growth occurs one person at a time, and that your efforts to build your blog community should therefore focus on getting one person to join or become more involved in it.

[Three Ways to Grow Your Blog Community in an Economic Crisis](#) by Sonia Simone - Excellent guiding principles for community building, especially during adverse times.

[Community Spark](#) by Martin Reed - Martin's website is full of articles on how to build an online community, including blog readership and loyalty. I love his point about the [necessity of added value](#).

[How to Build Community on Your Blog](#) by Darren Rowse - A quick list of ideas by a true master at online community building.

My [Blog Improvement Checklist](#) contains a variety of questions you can ask and steps you can take to improve every aspect of your blog, including its community.

I'd love to hear your [comments and suggestions](#)!

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