



# Defining Community Management Roles



THE COMMUNITY  
**ROUNDTABLE**

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# Overview

This ebook takes a deep dive on the roles profiled in the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 and provides a practical guide for community professionals, hiring managers and HR teams.

- **Understand distinctions in community management roles.** The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 research collected data for three common community roles – and the years of experience, salary and skills required for each.
- **Meet real life community professionals.** Three community professionals share what they do in their jobs and offer advice based on their experience.
- **Prepare job descriptions.** Use the research data to determine what qualifications are necessary for different community roles, and the responsibilities and main priorities of each.
- **Explore resources that advance community management skills.** Whether you're looking to build your own skills or are a manager looking to increase your team's skills, the research highlights the top resources professionals use to network and build their capabilities.

This ebook is designed to help individuals use the research in the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 and can be used in the following ways:

## *For individuals:*

**Evaluate job opportunities** – Use this research to understand and assess job opportunities.

**Negotiate new roles** – Use this data to help educate and frame your conversations with hiring managers. Don't assume they understand the role better than you do.

**Redefine your current role** – If you are feeling overwhelmed – or underwhelmed – use this research to help redefine your role so that it is a better fit for both you and your organization.

**Get a promotion** – Are you taking on the responsibilities of a director of community but not getting the associated recognition or compensation? Use this data to show why you deserve more.

## *For hiring managers:*

**Define roles** – Better align responsibilities and compensation for community roles.

**Develop a career path** – Ensure that you are providing new opportunities for valuable employees.

**Improve recruiting results** – Well crafted job descriptions with aligned compensation will result in better candidates that are more likely to accept offers.

**Create development plans** – Use this research to help define skills and responsibility targets and review community management performance.

# About the Community Manager Salary Survey

*The Community Roundtable's mission is to advance the business of community.*

The launch of this research platform marks the start of a comprehensive, annual look at community management roles to give individuals and hiring managers information to:

- 1. Justify investment in community management staff**
- 2. Define the roles of community professionals by level of responsibility and context**
- 3. Align compensation rates with responsibilities and experience**

The 2014 report is the result of survey responses from over 350 community professionals. Participants self-reported the information used to produce this report. We are mindful that individuals self-report subjectively on qualitative measures, and the skills data should be interpreted with this in mind.

This research provides general trends in the roles and compensation of community professionals. Because of the wide variation in data and the modest survey response for some categories, this data does not reflect every specific circumstance.

The salary information in this report is based on the averages of the annual salaries of full-time professionals in U.S. dollars. Participants outside of the United States self-calculated their salary based on the exchange rate in the summer of 2014.

Survey participants were recruited through The Community Roundtable's clients, members and public networks, and because of that the data is biased toward the demographics of our audience.



## The CMSS2014 report:

- 1. Profiles the evolution of community management roles.*
- 2. Confirms emerging senior community management roles.*
- 3. Documents the ongoing challenges of aligning roles, compensation and responsibilities.*

# Community Management Skills Framework™

## Introduction to the Community Management Skills Framework

The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 research documents the first iteration of a new Community Management Skills Framework, which identifies and categorizes the skills and responsibilities of community professionals.

This research classifies community management skills in four skill families essential to the profession:

**Engagement and people skills:** These skills enable relationship development, understanding motivations and the design of social environments that reward individuals.

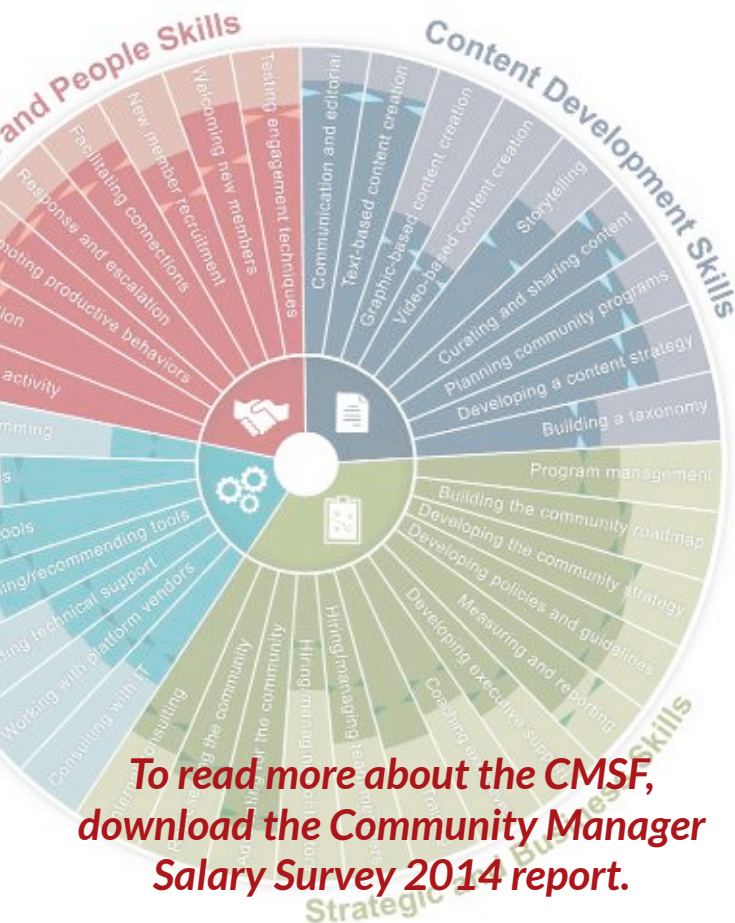
**Content development skills:** These skills enable the creation of multi-modal content and programming designed to build engagement and drive value from multiple segments.

**Strategic and business skills:** These skills include the program management, governance, advocacy and training required for organizations to understand this new approach.

**Technical skills:** These skills include an understanding of the need for and implications of platform architecture, integration and analytics.

The CMSS2014 research explores the different responsibilities in each of these skill categories and if/how the way community professionals prioritize these skills changes depending on their experience level and job profiles.

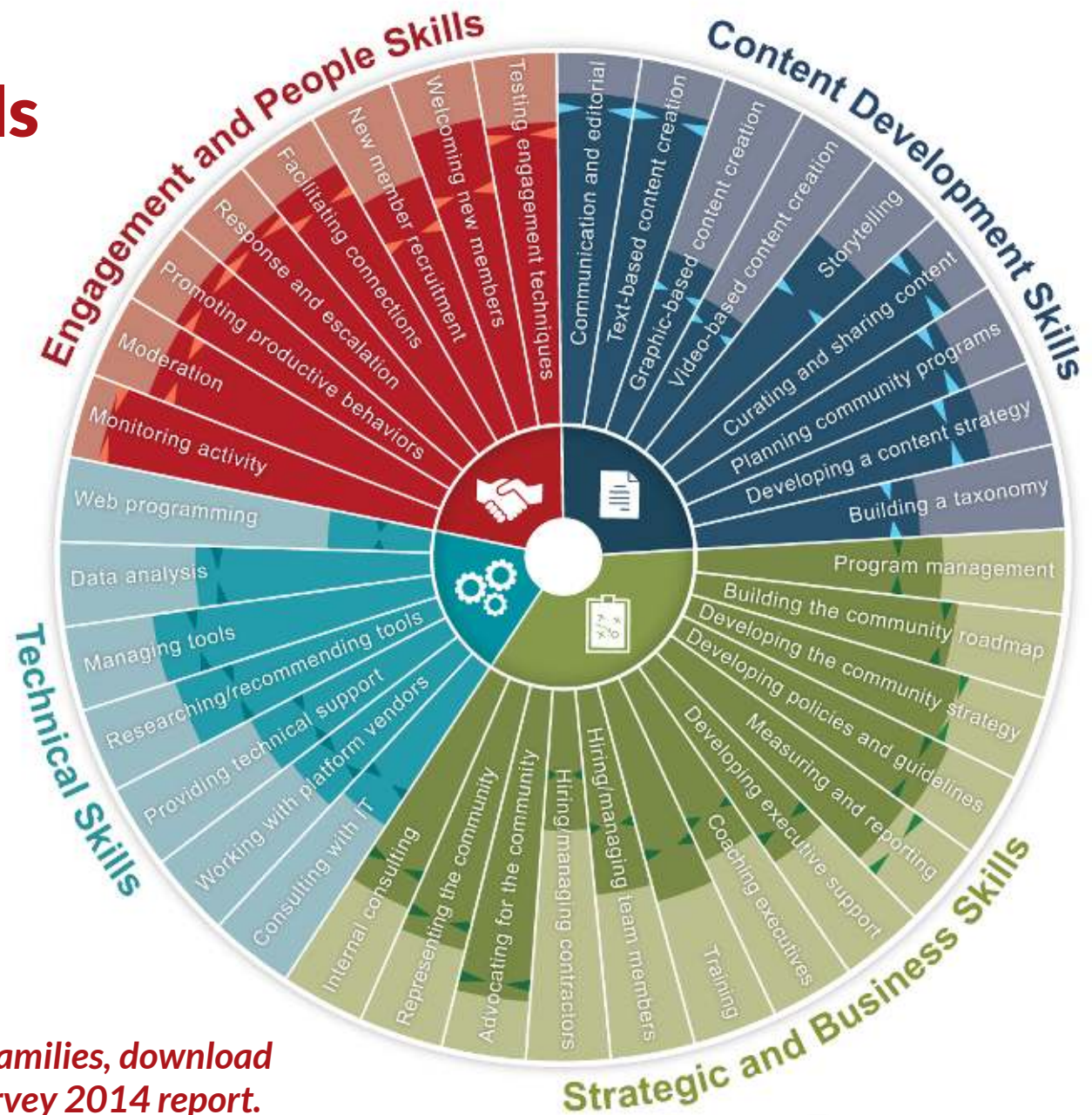
Overall, engagement and people skills rank highest across all job profiles. Content development skills are more important for less senior roles, and developing strategic and business skills is critical for community professionals looking to advance in their career. Technical skills are most relevant to community strategist roles.



# Community Management Skills Framework™ - Skill Families

Use the framework in the following ways:

- Assess an individual's strengths and weaknesses
- Assess a team's skills and responsibilities
- Develop professional development objectives
- Define standard job definitions
- Define new community management roles



To read more about the CMSF skill families, download the *Community Manager Salary Survey 2014* report.

# Community management roles



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# The Evolution of Community Management

## *What is community management?*

Community management is the discipline of ensuring productive communities and is becoming a strategic business skill. Because communities are one of the most effective ways to enable learning, personal growth and productivity, they play key roles in developing more fluid, collaborative and innovative organizations.

Community professionals – specialists, managers, strategists and directors – are those who understand the power and dynamics of community approaches and are in the best position to help organizations transition to the future of work and deploy new generative business models.

For many years, the title ‘community manager’ has been the dominant role in the community field. As the discipline has grown, one role has become insufficient to address all the needs of community teams – both because the responsibilities (and the experience they require) are expanding and because there are disciplines within the field – like analytics, content or governance – that can be roles in their own right.

The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 research and this ebook profile three community management roles:

- 1. Community Manager**
- 2. Community Strategist**
- 3. Director of Community**

Not every community program will staff all three roles, and these roles don’t suggest a linear career progression. Rather, these profiles detail the most common roles and the responsibilities and strengths of each role to aid in better resource planning, compensation and career advancement.

*The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 research profiled community professionals working with a variety of community use cases:*

### **External:**

- Social support
- Marketing
- Community of practice
- Product innovation

### **Internal:**

- Collaboration
- Community of interest
- Community of practice
- Corporate initiative

# Community Manager Role

	External	Internal
Years of work experience	10.8	15.6
Years of community management experience	4.2	4.7
Average salary	\$69,887	\$74,939
Median	\$70,000	\$70,000
Range	\$31K-\$145K	\$26K-\$150K

## Top three responsibilities

- Monitoring activity and listening
- Communication and editorial
- Curating and sharing content

## Top three performance metrics

- Activity rates
- Membership growth
- Specific business outcomes

## Overview of role

“Community manager” is the most common community management job title, and what that means in practice still varies wildly and often with few responsibilities typically associated with a ‘manager’ title. Though a community manager can be an entry-level role in some companies, on average community managers are mid-level professionals with at least several years of community management experience.

## Responsibilities

On the job, community managers are the face and voice of the community. To make the community successful, they need to work with members to help them find value in visiting and participating in community as well as ensuring organizational sponsors also receive value.

Community managers balance tactical engagement and programming activities with more strategic responsibilities like planning and reporting. In small organizations they are likely responsible for everything related to the community, while at larger organizations they often have direct reports or are supported by outsourced resources.

Ultimately, community managers ensure a strong community 'heartbeat' – by building relationships, setting expectations, managing content and running programming

## Making a difference in the community

A community manager’s special gift is empathy – a knack for understanding members and their motivations, needs and goals then connecting them with other members, content and programs that help them achieve their goals.

Data from the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014



# Profile of a Community Manager



*Eileen recommends community managers focus on sustained relationship building and executive sponsorship throughout an organization to ensure ongoing community success:*

*“Greater engagement, willingness to tackle difficult issues, and so on won’t happen unless a strong, positive trusting relationship is maintained.”*

## *Eileen Foran: Community Manager, Limelight Networks*

Eileen has been working with online communities since 2009. In her current role at Limelight Networks, she is responsible for building and growing Limelight Connect, an online community for Limelight customers, partners, and prospects.

Eileen had the opportunity to build the community from scratch. Like any good community manager, her first task was to identify the community need and the value a community approach could bring to the organization. To find the “WIIFM” (What’s in it for me?) factor, Eileen interviewed both potential members and internal stakeholders to uncover needs and understand trends. The insights from this research before launch served as the basis for an extensive internal education effort that continued into the pilot phase of the community. Eileen spent time with all member segments including senior executives, and she paid particular attention to internal participants whom she knew were going to be critical to community success.

### **Eileen’s research-based approach to understanding community needs:**

- ✓ **Interview:** Open ended discussion provides valuable insights into community understanding and need
- ✓ **Collect:** Ensure you are getting input from all levels and angles of the community
- ✓ **Find themes:** Examine what you have heard, surface common themes, issues, opportunities
- ✓ **Share data:** Sharing what you learn shapes community, provides valuable insight on broader organizational issues
- ✓ **Survey:** With broad themes identified, survey confirms findings, summarizes need

# Community Manager Job Description

*Similar job titles include:  
Community engagement manager,  
Online engagement coordinator,  
Social experience specialist*

## Job Description Variables

**Use case:** Different use cases require different experiences and familiarity

**Audience profile:** Familiarity and comfort with the target audience will increase trust

**Community size:** Larger communities require more staff and automation than smaller communities, which allow for deeper relationships

**Community maturity:** Community management in new communities requires more strategic skills than in older communities where activities are more routine

**Qualifications:** *The ideal candidate has 10 years of work experience and 4 years of community management experience. They have a firm grasp of community management as well as business context, which will help them build relationships and make smart decisions for the community. They have strong interpersonal, communication and critical thinking skills and are naturally curious and empathetic.*

## Responsibilities

### Engagement & People

- Ongoing monitoring of activity and listening to understand member segments
- Ongoing moderation, response and escalation of community activity
- Promote and highlight ideal member behaviors
- Facilitate connections among members
- Facilitate the member welcoming experience

### Content Development

- Develop and manage an editorial calendar
- Create text-based content (Blog posts, newsletters, etc)
- Curate, manage and share content of interest to members
- Plan and facilitate community programs that trigger member engagement

### Strategic & Business

- Measure and report community performance
- Advocate for the community and coordinate internally
- Manage staff or outsourced resources

### Technical

- Manage and administer community platforms and tools
- Research and recommend community tools

# Community Strategist Role

	External	Internal
Years of work experience	14.3	15.3
Years of community management experience	6.9	4.5
Average salary	\$85,075	\$90,400
Median	\$82,500	\$92,000
Range	\$25K-\$183K	\$51K-\$140K

## Top three responsibilities

- Monitoring activity and listening
- Developing the community strategy
- Measuring and reporting community performance

## Top three performance metrics

- Specific business outcomes
- Activity rates
- Membership growth

Data from the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014

## Overview of role

The community strategist role is a less tactical position dedicated to what the title implies – community strategy. Typically strategists are individuals with community management experience who are particularly skilled in strategic skills: analysis, community architecture, business models and the ability to understand the interdependencies between different pieces of a community ecosystem.

## Responsibilities

Community strategists focus on designing community approaches and then optimizing communities for performance and growth. They follow trends, apply research and test engagement techniques. Though not every community has a strategist on staff, all can learn from strategists' big picture thinking that informs a well planned community strategy. The strategist role also may have a strong technical background, and some strategists manage platform development and user experience.

Community strategists are most likely to work in professional service firms or as part of centralized community program office that provides internal community consulting to business units and other groups within large organizations. They are more likely to be individual contributors, and they act as subject matter experts within their ecosystem.

## Making a difference in the community

Strategists have a special knack for understanding community performance. They've mastered common engagement practices, and they apply a critical and analytical perspective to make recommendations for the community's roadmap. Successful strategists have clearly identified the shared value of a their communities, and their approach is actionable and measurable.

# Profile of a Community Strategist



*Maria recognizes the power of community to create habits and change behaviors:*

*"Focus on behaviors and not features, and really know your community."*

*Maria Ogneva: Head of Community, Sidecar Technologies*

Maria has had a long tenure in community management and has worked as both a community lead and as a subject matter expert for vendors. Combined, that gives her experience and perspective across a lot of communities – critical to help see how different approaches produce different outcomes. Maria believes that no community program will work if an organization doesn't empower its employees, and she works at the intersection of passion, behavior and technology.

As the Head of Community for the ridesharing startup Sidecar, Maria wanted to create a national forum for Sidecar's driver community, while allowing them to have regional conversations to share local tips and real-time updates.

Maria took an agile approach to community building by first setting up a space for her members on a public social media site. Maria then interviewed drivers. By both watching organic behavior and purposefully digging into what specific drivers needed, she could build a community strategy that met the drivers' needs while fulfilling the organization's goals.

## **Ways Maria approaches community strategy:**

- ✓ **Watch:** Instead of a hypothesis, tangible evidence of members' needs and behavior is invaluable input into designing an approach that works.
- ✓ **Interview:** Digging in and understanding stakeholder desires, needs and fears helps avoid costly mistakes.
- ✓ **Focus:** By focusing on behavior change, you can increase the community's time-to-value.
- ✓ **Analyze:** Make sure to check and test your assumptions constantly. Communities don't stand still.

# Community Strategist Job Description

Similar job titles include:

Community engagement analyst,  
Social strategy and content manager,  
Community strategy consultant

## Job description variables:

**Use case:** Use cases will define the industry and functional experience required

**Size of organization:** Large organizations or service firms working across multiple clients are most likely to hire community strategists

**Organizational context:** Community strategists are likely to become frustrated if an organization is not willing to invest in community growth

**Qualifications:** The ideal candidate has more than 12 years of work experience and 4-5 years of community management experience. They have a clear perspective for how to optimize and measure community performance and are a subject matter expert. They have strong analytical and technical skills and are good decision makers.

## Responsibilities:

### Engagement & People

- Monitor and listen to understand member needs
- Test engagement techniques in order to boost participation

### Content Development

- Develop a content strategy aligned with the community strategy
- Plan community programs designed to trigger the creation of value
- Create effective community playbooks and other documentation

### Strategic & Business

- Define the community purpose and shared value
- Develop the community strategy
- Define community performance measures and reports
- Develop community policies and guidelines
- Advocate for and build support for the community internally

### Technical

- Research and recommend tools that enable engagement and behavior change
- Manage and configure tools as needed
- Develop and test hypothesis for demonstrating community value
- Analyze community data to address stakeholder needs

# Director of Community

	External	Internal
Years of work experience	16.4	16.2
Years of community management experience	7.4	7.1
Average salary	\$106,356	\$113,263
Median	\$97,500	\$105,000
Range	\$39K-\$240K	\$50K-\$240K

## Top three responsibilities

- Developing the community strategy
- Advocating for the community
- Developing community policies and guidelines

## Top three performance metrics

- Activity rates
- Specific business outcomes
- Membership growth

Data from the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014

## Overview of role

Directors of community lead community programs and typically lead a team that includes community managers, analysts, content experts and often application or technical specialists depending on the team's size. Community management is central to their career path, with an average of over seven years of domain experience as well as significant work experience.

## Responsibilities

Directors of community focus on the health of a community program. Like strategists, they are looking at the big picture. Unlike most strategists, they are responsible for execution – planning and delivering on the community roadmap. Their priorities tend to be governance, internal advocacy, training and measurement.

A large part of the director of community role is as an internal champion - ensuring that executives and other stakeholders understand the value of the community. While directors still participate occasionally in tactical responsibilities and that background is critical, their main focus is on operational strategy.

## Making a difference in the community

What makes directors of community successful is the strong leadership and relationship building skills they've developed in community management roles. Not only must they manage a staff, but they also need to advocate for the community across departments and help others understand the community's value in the organization. Because the director role is often a newer one, directors must be comfortable leading in ambiguous situations, communicating and persisting in change efforts.

# Profile of a Director of Community



*Responsiveness really pays off. “I am surprised by how consistently responsiveness wins. By continuing to engage until there is a resolution or cutoff point, and if you stay authentic and transparent about your agenda and role, you get a lot of leeway from the community.”*

*Christian Rubio: Global Community Director, SERMO*

Christian has worked in community management for over a decade, leading both large B2C and B2B communities. For most of his career the communities he has run have been an integral part of the organization as a whole giving him unique insight into operating communities as businesses.

Christian joined SERMO, a community for doctors, to help them take their community-based business to the next level, which required investment in governance, content and community management resources.

Christian’s first priority was to improve trust – both between the organization and its members and between members themselves. This investment took time, transparency, and new moderation practices. The process created some adjustments within the community and the organization – and required confidence gained through experience to navigate it successfully.

While building community trust is tactical, like all great community executives, Christian knows trust is an asset that unlocks a huge part of business model value – supporting a vastly improved service for customers, providing a platform for strategic exploration and ultimately improving revenues.

## **Christian’s operational priorities:**

- ✓ Align the community with how the organization generates value
- ✓ Structure the community around its members most valued constraint
- ✓ Focus on maintaining trust within the community – both structurally through governance and process and tactically through moderation
- ✓ Manage the community like a product
- ✓ Constantly educate peers and executives

# Director of Community Job Description

*Similar job titles include:  
Director of social business, Head  
of community, VP of community*

## Job description variables:

**Size of community:** Larger communities require bigger teams making management, mentoring and leadership traits more important

**Size of organization:** Large organizations require experience working in complex environments – and the patience to go slowly

**Organizational context:** Familiarity with the organization's business model and culture can enhance the trust of stakeholders considerably

**Qualifications:** *The ideal candidate has at least 15 years of work experience, across different functions and with direct reports, and 7 years of community management experience. A director of community needs strong leadership and business skills to manage a community team and define the governance of a community program.*

## Responsibilities:

### Engagement & People

- Hire, mentor, manage and develop staff
- Promote and reward productive behaviors among staff and members
- Analyze and test engagement techniques that encourage behavior change

### Content Development

- Communicate priorities for community programs and other communication
- Analyze need and set direction for programs, events and other activities

### Strategic & Business

- Develop and update the community strategy
- Build the community roadmap
- Secure budget and resources
- Ensure executive sponsorship and champion the community internally
- Engage and manage consultants and contractors, as needed
- Architect community governance, policies and guidelines
- Create a community measurement approach and framework
- Deliver training appropriate to different stakeholder audiences

### Technical

- Select and acquire tools that support community goals
- Oversee community tool portfolio to ensure effectiveness



# Opportunities



# What's Next for Community Management

## It's a good time for community professionals.

Community professionals have opportunities across use cases, industries, locations and experience levels. They have career growth options – sometimes within their own organizations - and resources and peers to help put them in the best place for their next role.

Organizations have a pool of dedicated and experienced professionals to hire. Though they can't look to graduates of a particular program to fill roles (there is no one recommended career path to community management!), they do have research that shows the skills and experience needed to manage a successful community.

The Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 confirmed community management as an industry has made a lot of progress. The 2014 report cited three potential opportunities to advance the community management profession:

### *1. Set realistic expectations*

Role definitions that have enough responsibilities for three people are one reason community managers are burning out. A new community may only need one community manager on staff, but a growing community in a large organization will require more resources to succeed. Consider using the support of consultants and contractors to back fill specific skills that don't need a dedicated full-time resource.

### *2. Rationalize community roles*

Organizations need to develop better standards and job categories for various roles within community management. "Community manager" shouldn't be the default or only job title, and some thought should be given to how community managers advance in their career so that the best individuals continue to receive stimulating challenges.

### *3. Promote community executives*

As more organizations embrace community as a key part of their business strategy, community professionals will hold more senior roles. They will use this rank to educate other executives to champion the cause and create widespread organizational change.

# Learning Opportunities for Community Professionals

## *Investing in a community management career*

There are multiple emerging roles for community professionals and our research shows that a good percentage of them – 36% - are getting promoted. However, community professionals still need to be proactive about career advancement – building their skills and networks and sometimes even defining their own new roles. Good places to start:

### *Stay current*

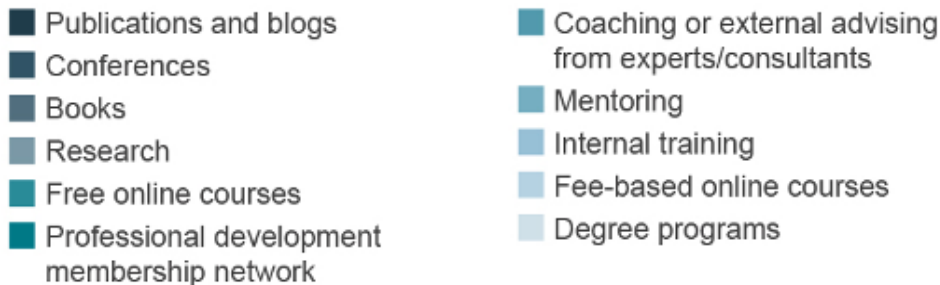
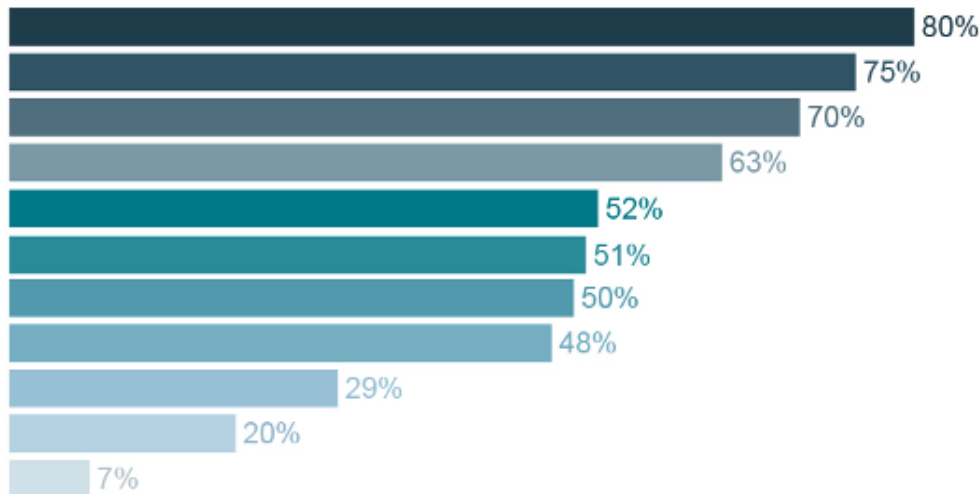
The field of community management is changing rapidly as it grows – consolidating in core principals but fragmenting as well, as groups addressing specific industries are use cases grow. Stay current with:

- Reading
- Training
- Conferences
- Professional networks

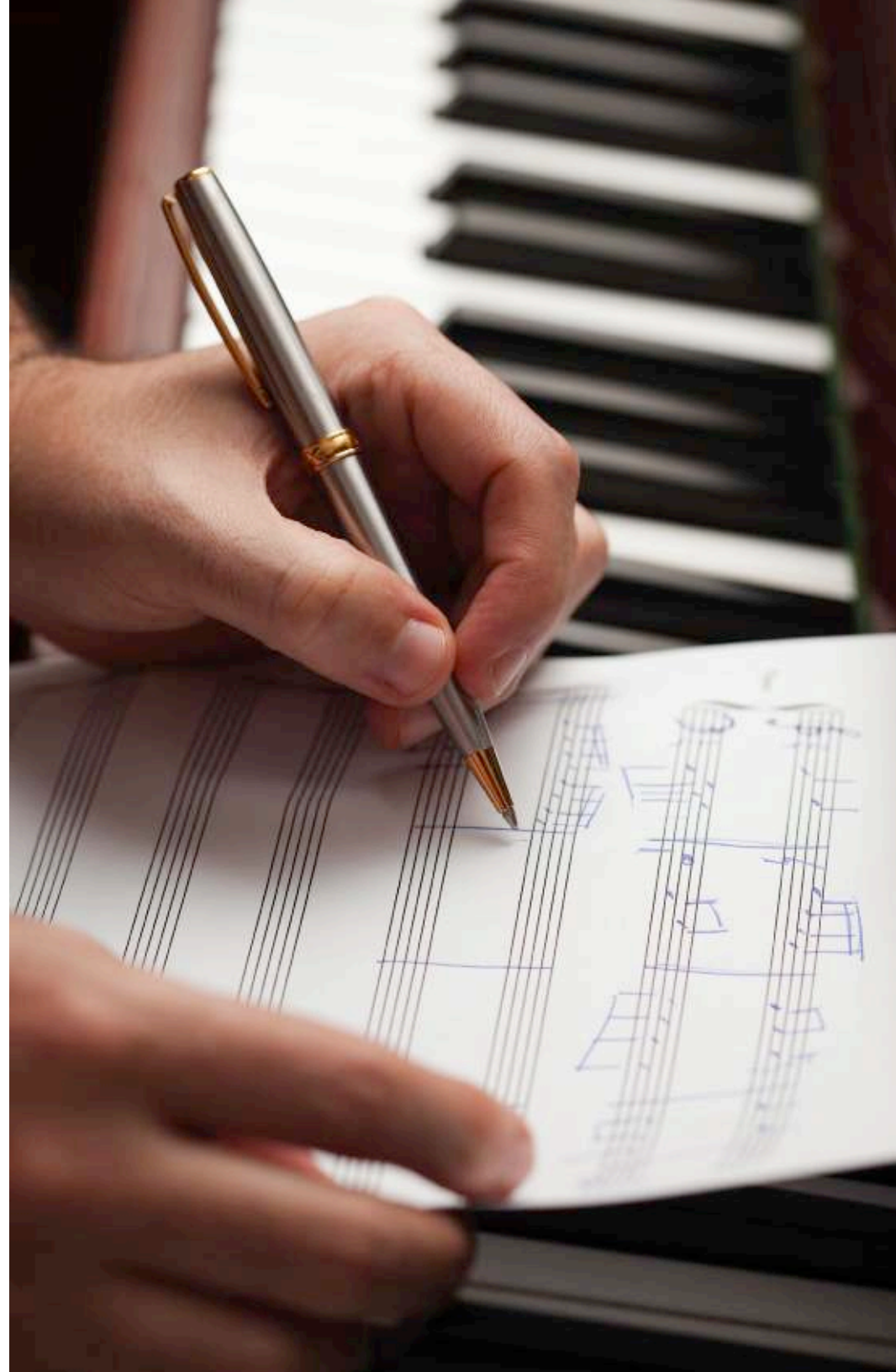
### *Build relationships*

Relationships are central to community management – not only with members, but among those working in the industry and their peers, colleagues and stakeholders. These relationships help professionals learn from others, build their reputation, improve their work and surface new opportunities. Find them at:

- Local events and conferences
- Training
- Conferences



# Appendix



# Build Your Skills

## Join a professional network



## Take a training course



### Three Courses

- Community Manager
- Community Strategist
- Advanced Skills



### Two Courses

- Internal Community Manager
- External Community Manager
- More coming!

## Attend a conference



# Profile of Jive Community Professionals

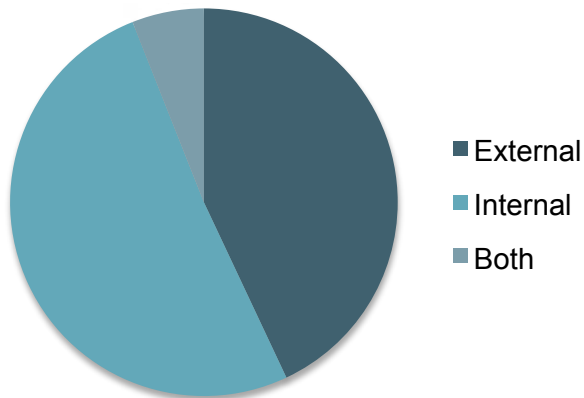
Jive customers who participated in the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 had a similar breakdown of roles to the research average but were more likely to manage internal use cases. Professionals in the Jive customer segment had higher salaries and were also more likely to find their role by being approached directly by a hiring manager - 37% vs 29% in the research average.

## Average salaries



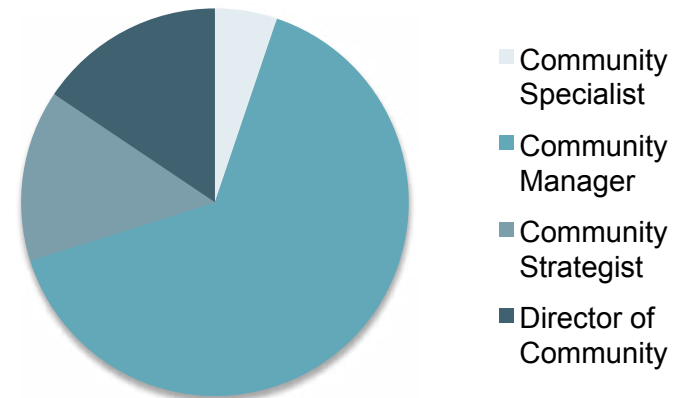
## Community use case

Jive customers are more likely to work with internal communities than the CMSS2014 survey average.



## Job title

Jive community managers had similar roles to the survey average.



# Jive Community Professionals' Skills

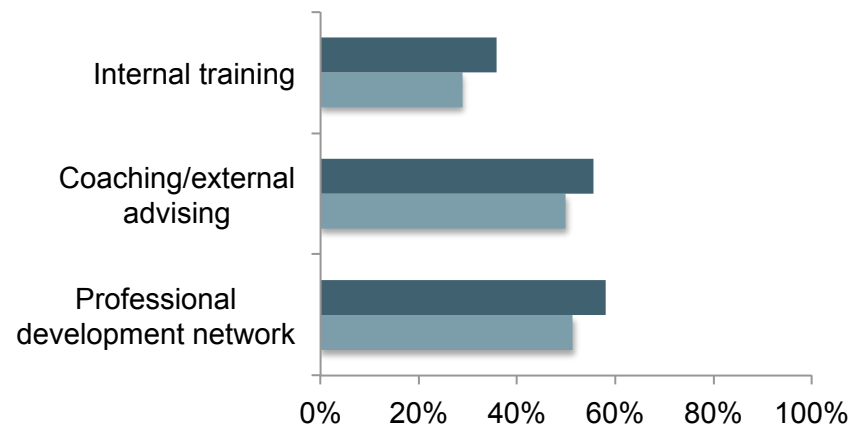
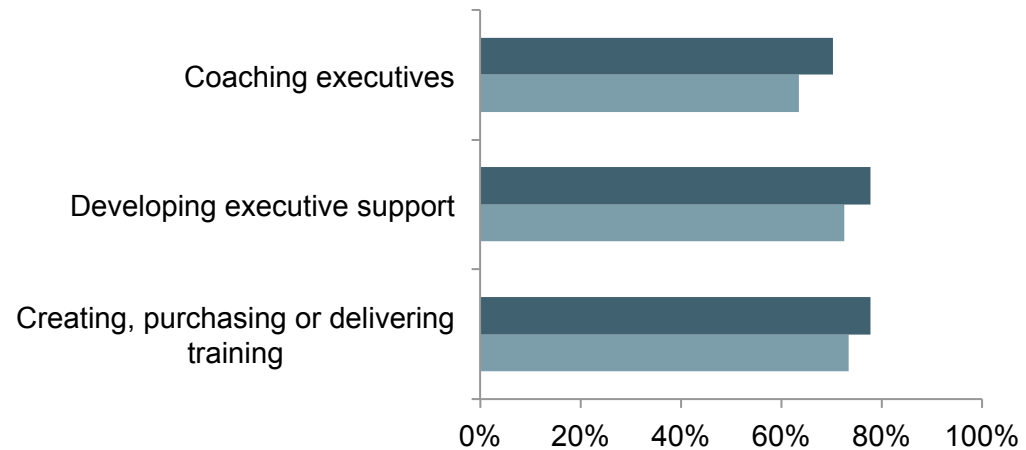
*Jive customers who participated in the Community Manager Salary Survey 2014 had more skills in areas of strategic enablement of enterprise programs – working with executives and delivering training – than the survey average and were significantly more likely to have access to professional development resources to improve their skills.*

*Jive customers are more likely to have these strategic skills:*

1. Coaching executives
2. Developing executive support
3. Creating, purchasing or delivering training

*Jive customers are more likely to have access to the following professional development resources:*

1. Internal training
2. Coaching/external advice
3. Professional development network



■ Jive customer segment ■ Survey average

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# About the Sponsor

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Jive (NASDAQ: JIVE) is the premier provider of modern communication and collaboration solutions for business, recognized as a leader by the industry's top analyst firms in multiple categories. Our products enable people and organizations to work better together, using technology that adapts to their way – not the other way. The world's best companies depend on Jive to unleash the ideas and impact of their employees, partners and customers. More information on [jivesoftware.com](http://jivesoftware.com).



# About The Community Roundtable

*Mission: Advance the Business of Community*

**Champion** Advocate for the needs of community business owners and teams

**Educate** Provide training solutions to community and social business leaders

**Curate** Aggregate, document and share community management best practices

*Services*

TheCR Network | Research | Community Management Training | Advisory

*Member and client organizations*

## Leadership Team



Rachel Happe  
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