

Intro :

Hi I'm Stephanie, and if you didn't already know, surprise! You're at GDC! You had lots of choices for talks this afternoon and for some reason you were tricked into coming to mine. Sucker! Just kidding. Hopefully the quick info I'll provide will help you get a start in creating a community plan for you.

Will I give you all the answers? Probably not, every community is different, but hopefully these templates will help you get started when so often, we don't know where to begin!

So, you have to make a plan, 1st rule, like the hitchhikers' guide once told us, DONT PANIC. SERIOUSLY, IT'LL BE OKAY. OKAY, SO that's not really a rule so much as a guideline... But...

The real first rule? Ask the the right questions.

You need to know your community first, this means interacting, listening, participating. Keep notes. How do you compare to your direct competitors? What phase is the community in? Knowing where they fall in the funnel is important!

Next, what are your studios goals! What are your teams success metrics?

Let's break this down further!

Matched to slide: Inception, established, mature, mitosis.

These are all terms for community you can find in the book buzzing communities and I really feel like when starting a community plan, it's way easier to break down what you're doing by putting the community into one of these buckets first, so you know how you want to create your content plan.

The pattern: where is your community spending time? Who is your actual community, what the content?! And the future!

Since I can't go into every example here. I'll just give you a slice example of community to look at. Say, we're gonna create something for a mid core mobile title. (Matches example slide)

This step should take you a couple of weeks at least, if not a bit longer. But see why it's important? Having this info means when you can go into a meeting and someone says we should be buying facebook ads to acquire users but you know your players are not on facebook, you can show some hard data of links, posts, threads, and your notes if you want on what you've learned about your particular community. (That's when you mic drop and sashay out of the meeting)

And now we come to goals.

And the ever popular oh snap, the metrics chat!

I can't tell you how often teams don't know what current channels they have available to post on are, or where a game has a presence, or sometimes even what channels they own. There should ALWAYS be a slide in your presentation that lists out, with links please, all of your current channels and what the current follower, like, pinner, whatever count currently is.

Without establishing a point in time with data, there's no way to show the growth and how important what you're doing actually is.

This also helps determine where you might want to grow next based on participation from your current fans, or follow trends in order to make content to match it.

With your team, or with your boss and marketing/PR, you should decide what is the most important in community: rising community sentiment levels? Keeping fans currently engaged? Growing an aging community or starting from scratch? (See how helping to put the community into buckets to start means you've already drilled down a level and you can go back to the team with your head held high that you TOTALLY know what's best. Because you're in it!)

You should also decide on when you want to do to reach these goals and by when, quarterly, monthly, it all depends on your teams targets.

Alright so. You got all this data, the team agrees in what's important and what y'all should strive for, now what the what are gonna do with it?

It's organize time!

Take that community knowledge and those success metrics, crack open an energy drink and start your plan!

Here's a quick snapshot of how I would build a plan.

We're gonna go through each of these so no need to get crazy and catch it all now.

Slide 1: community motto vision statement should be short list or paragraph summarizing your team's goals

2 example slides

Slide 2 is the SOTU channel metrics slide. Here's where we're at right now. Also, this is where you should link out all the channels you own

Example slide

Break out that data you've been sitting on. It's a gold mine!

This is also a very important time since more than likely, this report could potentially be shared studio, or company wide. You want everyone to understand the language you're speaking, be frank about what works and be very honest about what doesn't, and adjust. Don't be scared to say this wasn't good. This is also a good time to introduce the sentiment thermometer, a quick color coded bar you should add to a report so even if someone opens the email and only sees

one picture, it's at least that bar with either red yellow green, think of it like a defcon scale. I used to add pictures to reports too of cute animals just to get people's attention. You should be playful and show personality - especially if it's an internal report.

Show them what you've been doing. (Discuss example slide)

Show demo breakdown slide.

Be the expert I KNOW you are!

Success metrics slide: take the meetings and emails you've had with your team and put them on digital paper.

It's good to use tables - you can list out overview strategies and numbers, maybe include budget info or even create a list and really elaborate on how you intend on achieving the goals you mentioned on the slide before

Explain the standard for reporting, decide how often, what they will look like and templize like mad! It really does help.

Regular reporting keeps you honest and busy and allows you to show the team I don't just sit on Twitter, and if I am just on Twitter, here's the interactions I've had, comments, questions, learnings, etc.

This is also a good time to discuss with the team about monitoring tools, do you need them? Are there in house options? Do you need more help. If you're on a team whose goal is to answer every single person on Facebook and you have 2 million fans, that's not scaleable and show them why! It's too much! You're not a robot.

Time to share your proposed plans big and small how you're supporting the community, the team, all that jazz.

This includes big idea projects. (Match slide)

It's okay to go pie in the sky and ask, but be sure you really factor in timelines budgets and demand on your time. Create a little schedule. Show why it would be beneficial.

Also, don't be afraid to collaborate with others, sometimes it can really turn into something cool

Last section of your deck should be a schedule.

Now you can have an overview schedule with just the beats for say a launch window, or if you want to discuss specific content, create a table and show the content you've written (this also helps when you have share decks with external partners who might not have access to your internal wiki or calendar structure or you only want to give them just the facts)

(Show example slides of calendars.)

Things to remember you're not alone! You have help!

And sometimes, go for the extra flair,

Extra flair you say!? But Steph, I'm super busy, hey man, there's always time for flair.

Create a content beats slide showcasing how your postings coincide with PR and marketing plans, offer up some slides with post launch content or a calendar to show you're thinking beyond the launch buildup and instead want to build community longevity.

I also recommend that every time a big PR beat happens, or a social milestone, you better be emailing the company about it and celebrating, not to be a brag HERE, but I was THRILLED WHEN PvZ hit 10 million. It was so much hard work for the team and made us the 3rd largest page at EA so I set up an office party, after I got budget approved, so the entire company could celebrate.

One last thing. I promised templates. If you follow that URL, there will be templates up there that are sort of fill in the blank but they will be focused on the 4 buckets I mentioned earlier - that way you always have a starting point but for a report, BUT you still have to do the leg work.

I just want to say thanks again and if you have questions I am all over the. Internet. Just say hey!