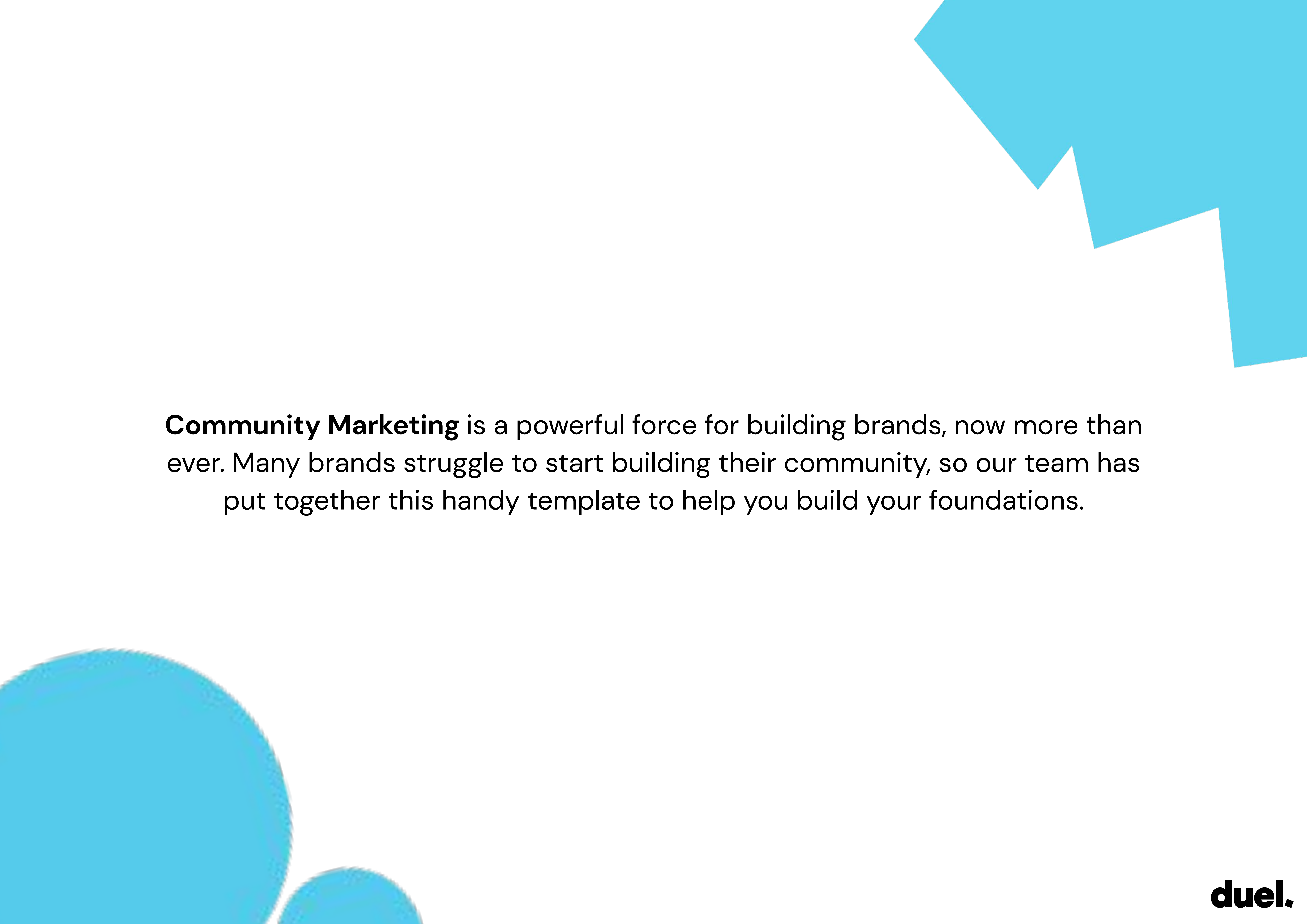# Community Marketing Starter Template

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Community Marketing is a powerful force for building brands, now more than ever. Many brands struggle to start building their community, so our team has put together this handy template to help you build your foundations.

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What is a community?

A community is a space, digital or physical, where people share a connection or belonging to something.

Beyond this definition, there are 3 markers that researchers say indicate a brand community →

1. **Consciousness of kind:**

   an intrinsic understanding that people in a community are connected together, and different from outsiders

2. **Rituals & traditions:**

   specific acts and behaviours that solidify culture and meaning in a community

3. **Sense of obligation to community:**

   a sense of moral obligation that drives community members to serve each other

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How to use this guide

- This guide is meant to help you build the foundations required before effectively building or nurturing a brand community.

- Each section will prompt you to fill in important information about your approach to community. You can input this information on this document or follow along in a separate document.

- We recommend completing this guide together with multiple team members or having multiple people go through the template on their own time. Many of these questions will require deep consideration and multiple perspectives.

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1. Define your brand purpose

In this section you will be either creating or fortifying your brand's purpose. Communities are built around a brand's specific purpose or story. This purpose or story is the initial hook and foundation of why people are willing to build a relationship with your brand. If this part is not well-established or changes too often, you risk confusing your community members. So it is important to establish it firmly.

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Examples of brands with a great sense of purpose
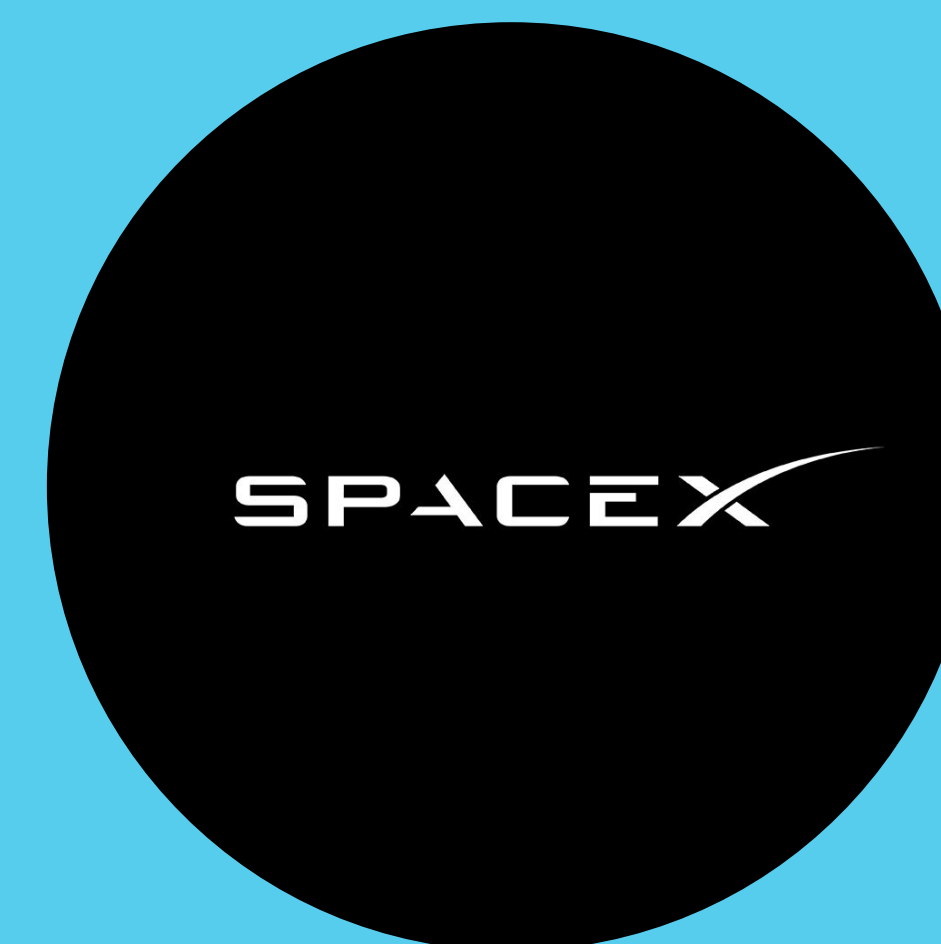
Environmental
Impact
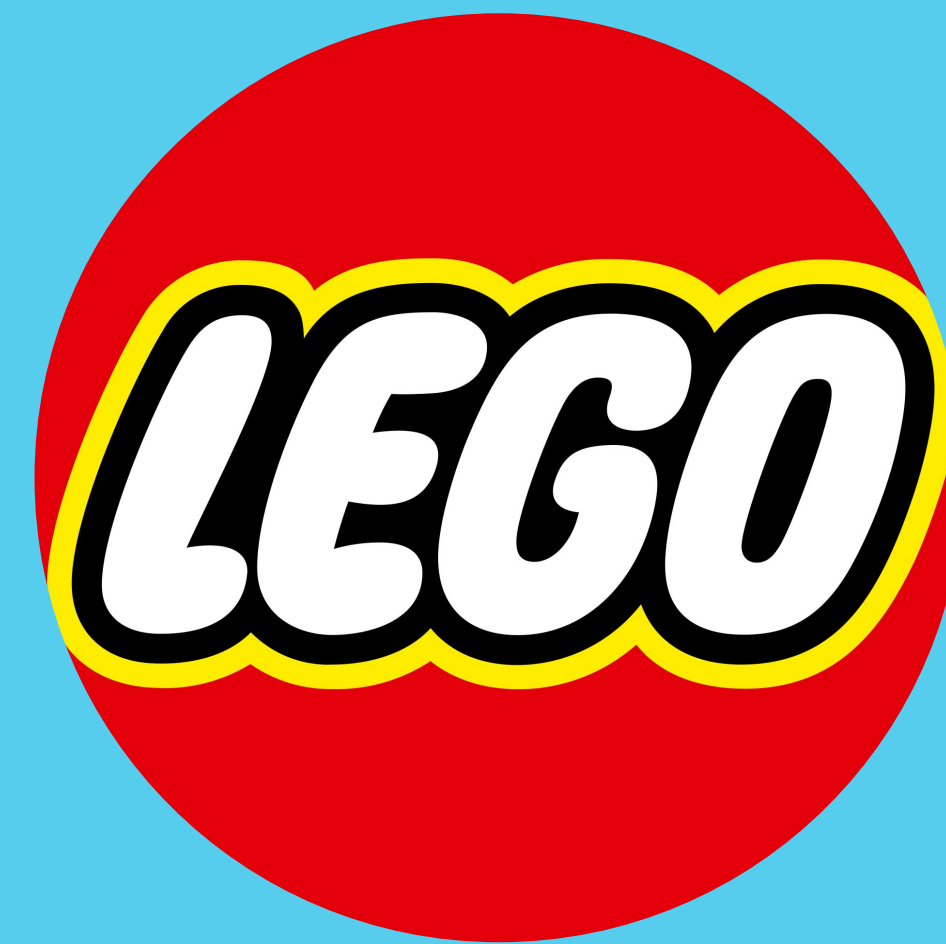
Creativity &
Inspiration

Health &
Wellness

Customer
Experience

Space
Colonisation

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Questions to solidify your brand purpose

*Consider feedback you've gotten from employees, customers and community members. Have any of them articulated specific ideas around the brand?

What is the story or purpose behind your brand?

What would the world look like if you achieved your purpose?

What is the shared connection / belonging that unites your community?

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2. Identify your brand network

In this section you will be mapping out your overall brand network. A brand network is made up of different groups of people that support your brand. Customers and employees are usually included, but organisations, partners, and influencers can be part of your brand network as well.

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Customer Base   Ambassadors   Paid Influencers and collaborators   Employees

Brand Network
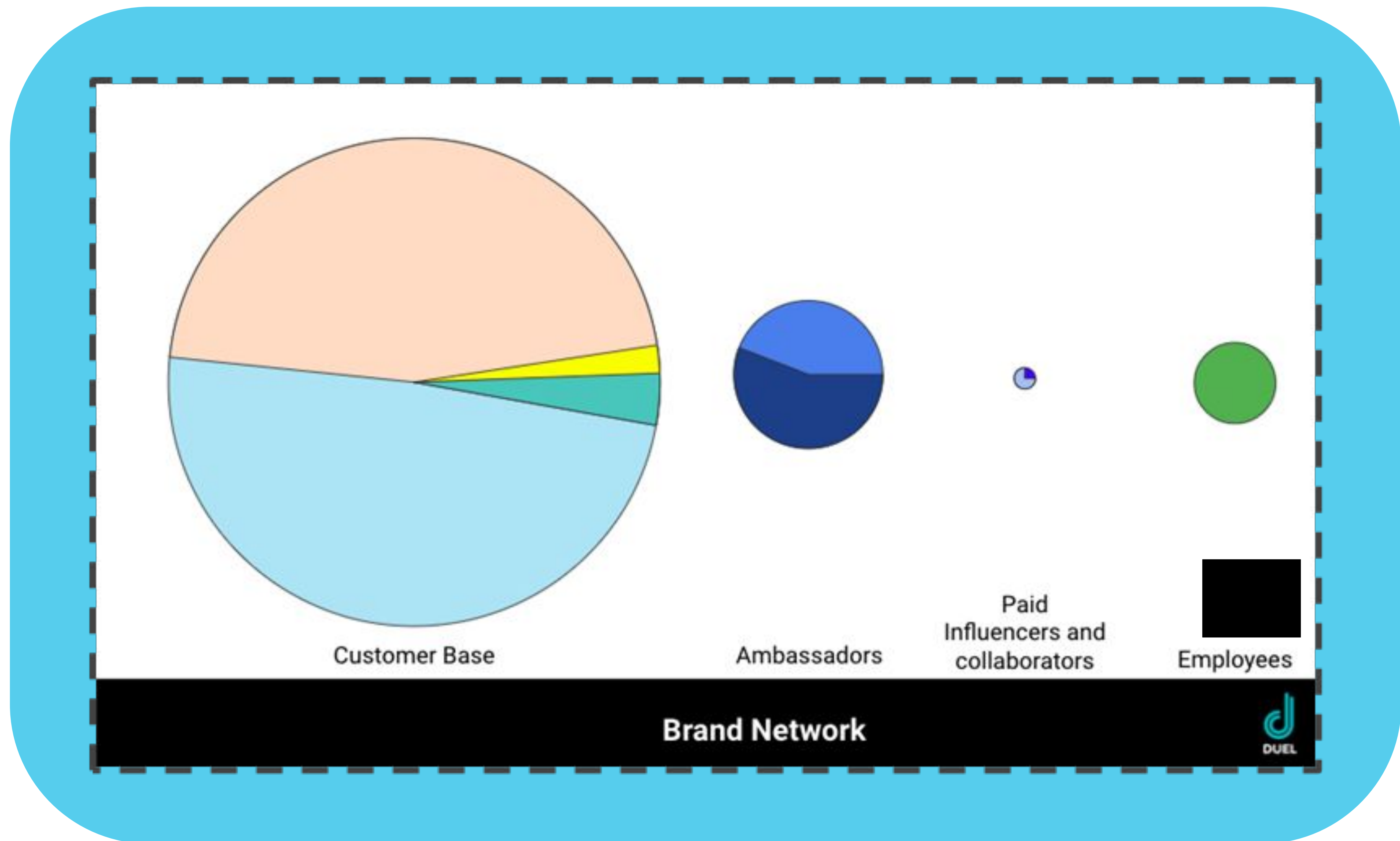
This supports in identifying who you are creating a community for. There may be multiple groups you may be inviting into your community.

If you are creating a community for multiple groups within the overall brand network – the purpose, the message and the story should stay consistent.

This is your brand purpose. This should not change.

How you interact with these different groups within the brand network may change.

Examples of potential groups in your network

Customer Segments

Ambassadors

Paid Influencers

Charities & NGOs

Employees

Vendors

Partnered Brands

Associations & Clubs

Community Leaders

Media Partners

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List your brand network groups below

*List as many groups as needed. Feel free to use a separate document or expand the table to add additional groups.

Brand Network Groups

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Now select 3 groups to build your community around (initially)

*It is completely okay to build around a single group first. Customers are the most obvious and promising first option.

**It's tempting to target as many groups as possible to build a large community quickly, but this often leads to a complex setup process and diluted experience. We recommend starting small and well-targeted.

Selected Community Groups

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3. Determine experiences & interaction points for your community

In this section you will find effective ways to engage your current or potential community members. Experiences and interactions are the raw currency of your community.

They are the tangible elements of what drives people to join, participate in communities, as well as grow them.

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Establishing and executing on great interactions is the most challenging component of community building – it requires clever use of your resources and an understanding of what your members or potential members will really resonate with.

Every experience/interaction must:

1. Create an opportunity for expression (such as tweeting or meeting people)

2. Focus on the value provided to the community (not just the brand)

3. Align with the brand's purpose and story

4. Include an emotional draw or look

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Examples of experiences/interactions

Add engagement opportunities to post-purchase experiences

Host small scale, invite-only events for your most passionate community members

Foster conversations about the purpose you stand for

Create purpose-driven challenges for your community to take part in

Host large-scale digital events such as book clubs and keynotes

Tell brand stories on social channels

Have your CEO run an annual town hall for customers/community members

Spotlight and reward community members

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Brainstorm potential experiences & interactions for your community

*This can be as specific as you want. If you are still early in your community marketing developments, keep these interactions high-level and get specific at a later point.

**Make sure to consider the needs and desires of the groups you prioritised in step 2.

***List as many as you like. Feel free to use a separate document or expand the table to add additional points.

Experiences/Interactions

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Select 3 to 5 experiences/interactions to focus on delivering to your community (initially)

*This may be a difficult task to complete, but this prioritisation will allow you to streamline your community building efforts.

Selected Experiences/ Interactions

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4. Nurture brand advocates

This section is about understanding who your brand advocates are and how to drive them. Our team has noticed that the strongest brand communities are built through customers and others in the network that advocate for a brand and support them in a number of ways. Advocates are the MVPs of your community, they are often the most enthusiastic, most excited to share and can supercharge the growth of a community.

These advocates do not need to be paid influencers or famous celebrities—in fact the best brand advocates are simply genuine customers that already love the brand.

Identify key players in your community and turn them into brand advocates. Equip them with your brand story and give them the tools and ability to advocate on your behalf.

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Three key questions for the next section

1. Who are your advocates?

2. What can they do for you? What are they best suited to do to help your brand and community?

3. How can you help them and incentivise them to do more?

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Determine your advocates, motivations and incentives below

*This is a difficult question to answer and may require deep thought and time, but getting down specific ideas allows you to maximise your community efforts by focusing on specific community MVPs.

**Feel free to include specific people or breakdown larger groups like customers into smaller, more specific segments

Potential advocate	What they can do for you	How you can incentivize them
Superfan customer	- Convince friends to join community - Create review videos for products - Answer questions for potential customers	- Give exclusive access to new releases before launch - Invite to chat with the brand's founders
Community leader	- Host brand-sponsored workshops - Give out free product - Refer their audience to the brand	- Spotlight on social to boost their personal brand - Network them with other leaders
etc.		

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On Advocacy programs & Ambassador programs

The previous exercise should illuminate a lot of the value and opportunities that brand advocates pose for your community's health and growth. You know their value and how to motivate them to act.

Now the challenge is tracking their efforts, keeping them motivated and communicating in ways that are not difficult to manage for your brand.

That's why our team recommends the use of brand advocacy and brand ambassador programs.

While not completely necessary, these programs are an incredibly effective method for creating thriving brand communities.

Brand Advocacy Programs	Brand Ambassador Programs
● Used to manage a wide array of customers & advocates ● Built for scale and flexibility ● Typically better for expressing a high level of authenticity	● Used to manage smaller, more curated groups ● Built for more formalised relationships ● Typically better for expressing a high level of authority

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If you are interested in building programs like these, check out our writeup on "[How to Build an Advocacy Program](#)" here.

If you'd like to learn about different tech and platforms that are available, [read our guide here](#).

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5. Establish a measurement plan for the success of your community

In this section you will learn about measuring community success. There is no universal or well-established method to tracking community metrics, and success can be defined at many different levels and departments, so we recommend starting with the straightforward order of setting an objective, measurable goal, tactic and cost.

Objective → Measurable Goal → Tactic → Cost

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Example of a Success Measurement

Objective	Measurable Goal	Tactic	Cost
Increase sales of running shoes this summer	Generate $3.4 million in sales from running shoes by end of August 2023	Gift 5,000 pairs of running shoes to running clubs	$500,000
Notice, this is quite vague.	*Pull a measurable goal out of the objective*	*Identify how you will engage or provide an experience to your community to support in achieving the goal*	*How much will this cost you to execute?*

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Your turn: Establish 1 or 2 success measurements below

*If putting in highly specific data would be unhelpful at this point, input high level statements. Ie. you can say "shoe sales" in measurable goal without placing a specific number.

**Consider the experience/interaction points you decided on in step 3

Objective	Measurable Goal	Tactic	Cost

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6. Iterate & learn from failures

This section is more of a guideline than a component to complete. Your community strategy should be iterative by nature—communities are difficult to understand at first, and it's helpful to keep a spirit of experimentation and track results. The table below is just one way to track your progress.

We highly recommend that brands establish a method, meeting or team to regularly iterate on community initiatives to maximise results.

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Example of Tracking Initiatives

Tactic/ Initiative	Worked/ Didn't Work	Result	Key Points & Feedback	Next Steps (If Applicable)
Giving away shoes	Worked	$4,000,000 in revenue produced by August	Speed of delivery was great; Ran out of smaller sizes	Increase spend on shoe giveaways for next season
Free running clinic	Didn't Work	Only 20% of expected attendance	Times were inconvenient	Reschedule with new times for next season

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Conclusion

Having completed this guide, you should have a foundational understanding of your community, your advocates, the experiences you want to create, and your goals and measurement plans. Now the challenge is to refine your strategy, establish an action plan and begin!

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Additional Resources

- [How to Build Customer Loyalty & Retention Through the Post Purchase Experience](#)
- [Trends: The Return of Brand Marketing and a New Era of Advocacy](#)
- [Duel's Brand Advocacy Guide For Outdoor Brands](#)
- [Brand Advocacy Platform Buyer's Guide](#)

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