

The Importance of Communities

Communities are born around values, ideals, projects and people, says Vania Alessi

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We are all part of at least one community. The fact of sharing a common interest with a group of people – but also an association or an activity – makes us part of a community, creating a strong sense of belonging. If we consider this sense of belonging from a brand perspective, we become then an integral part of a tribe, which is reflected in the values and identity of the brand.

As human beings, we have always created connections with other people: to survive, to share jobs, efforts and responsibilities; but also, to help, to exchange information or goods. Our lives have always been based on the sharing of values and experiences within a community, pushing us to grow together in a constantly evolving society.

A personal and technological evolution related to the exchange of information and interests, the sharing of a passion and the increasingly tight link between people with common goals: our communities allow us to expand our knowledge, to experiment

with others and communicate our ideals, strengthened and supported by a cohesive and varied group of individuals, connected by invisible wires.

The past, The present and the pandemic

Thinking about the past, the present and the situation experienced during this pandemic, COVID-19 divided us, imposing social distancing. Suddenly we found ourselves alone, far from colleagues and from our personal and professional routines.

During 2020 we spent an incredible number of hours in front of screens, attending meetings and following training and self-training, listening or interacting with pixels and not with people. We have not always promoted internal communication at our workplace, sharing what we do and the challenges to be met. Therefore, we need to

belong to a community where we can freely discuss and interact, receive and give back.

Our children set up study groups to ask and answer questions (we may have done the same when in high school) to realize that they weren't just studying another chapter of philosophy, but rather a cultural concept that has always existed and announced the foundation for the communities of our century.

We are all looking for a group, for belonging, a passion to share, a second family where we can reveal our opinions.

A community is a common good and a place that over the years has been transformed according to the needs of people, always starting from a physical (or commercial) connection and landing on social and on the web for an increasingly active and updated connection. For this reason, it is a place where a single story gathers around anyone who sees themselves on this path.

The value of a community

We have been accustomed to hearing stories and getting carried away in the adventures of the various characters by identifying with them. These stories tie us to our favorite characters in books, as in cartoons. A great example is Disney, the name that for years has been synonymous with magic, fantasy and emotions. Thanks to its protagonists and the vicissitudes they faced – especially those who taught us the importance of family – this colossus of animations has managed to creep into our hearts. And Walt Disney did it mostly because of his stories. Today the magic continues in the TV series on Netflix.

Our life is based on emotions, and we team up with those people who share our same interests, pleasures, hobbies and values.

The brands and companies where we work today have understood the importance of history, of their own journey, and of how it is necessary to share values and a sense of aggregation. This is how we continue to look out for ourselves, to form bonds and to interact with those who share our vision. These bonds, which previously held us together through invisible threads in town squares and markets, have also been revived in the world of social media with the same imprint, as well as in our intranets and other internal communication channels.

Communication and internal relations have now become priorities and are the basis of the sense of belonging for communities: we need to create a dialogue, a relationship of trust, by bringing out the sense that binds intentions (code of conduct) and daily actions.

Community-making is just that: using all the tools possible to push each of us to open our eyes from our own range of actions,

to share our knowledge and the desire to perform at our best by putting people at the center.

Human to human

After BtoB (Business to Business) and BtoC (Business to Consumer) it is time now to talk about Human to Human: relationships and emotions, no more about transactions.

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How many successful communities can we count? Each of us is part of a professional community or a community related to passions and interests.

Some can be verticalized for interest and each one has its own language, but all have something in common: they bring value, inspiration, ideas, empowerment. Therefore, communities are fundamental to combating loneliness, to thinking about the future and being ready to change.

Advantages and community values

- Dialogue between people (sharing ideas and projects).
- More internal communication: communication is a common task that is enhanced with practice.
- Training: by investing in training and mentoring, productivity and revenue can grow.
- Encouraging team play (team building). If you do not involve all players in a collective challenge, there is no future.
- Promoting social welfare (more satisfaction means more productivity

and less turnover). The most important thing is “feeling well.”

- Creating respect and shared values: daily training for positivity and sharing values as a common denominator.
- Sustainability: if the present is sustainable, the future is guaranteed. This will gain more importance in the future, especially when considering different generations coexisting and collaborating.

Communities and social media

Instead of going out (in Italy, for example, 70% of companies are still working remotely) we are on chat groups and the intranet; now you can find yourself listening and interacting on Clubhouse as well. Groups are a meeting point for anyone looking for their community.

The usefulness of groups is social recognition: from groups where common passions are discussed to those where the latest news is shared, such as in the fields of technology, design, marketing or any profession, to groups created to bring together working groups, social networks give a space and a voice to everyone.

It's not easy to communicate our values without sounding boring, repetitive and un-original. And if we talk about brands, we realize that their uniqueness lies precisely in their history and identity – in a word, in their being community.

As Anthony Robbins says: “20% of every change is in knowing, the remaining 80% is in knowing why.” Communities help us to make sense of our many WHYs.

This is why “Together is better.”



Vania Alessi is a former C-level Assistant. In 2001, she founded Secretary.it, the Italian community and network of administrative professionals and Assistants. Vania speaks four languages, graduated with a degree in Economics and loves dealing with continuous improvement. Awareness and evolution of the skills needed by Assistants, together with leadership and empowerment, are the pillars of her commitment to the profession. “Be curious, kind and smile” is her mantra.