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COMMUNITY
MANAGEMENT
— SUMMIT —

Community Management's Time is NOW!

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What I'll Cover

- What business do I have giving this talk?
- Customers
- The value of community
- The rise of connected communities
- My learning to date
- It's time to step up
- Call to Action!
- Q&A



Who am I?

- Gordon Walton
- 34 years making games, 17 years of online-only (mostly MMO) games
- Involved in community interaction since 1985
- Worked with/managed many different community teams
- Recently moved into Social Gaming



Customers

- Historically companies thought of their customers as a faceless mass



Customers

- AND DISCONNECTED FROM EACH OTHER! - we reach them via megaphone

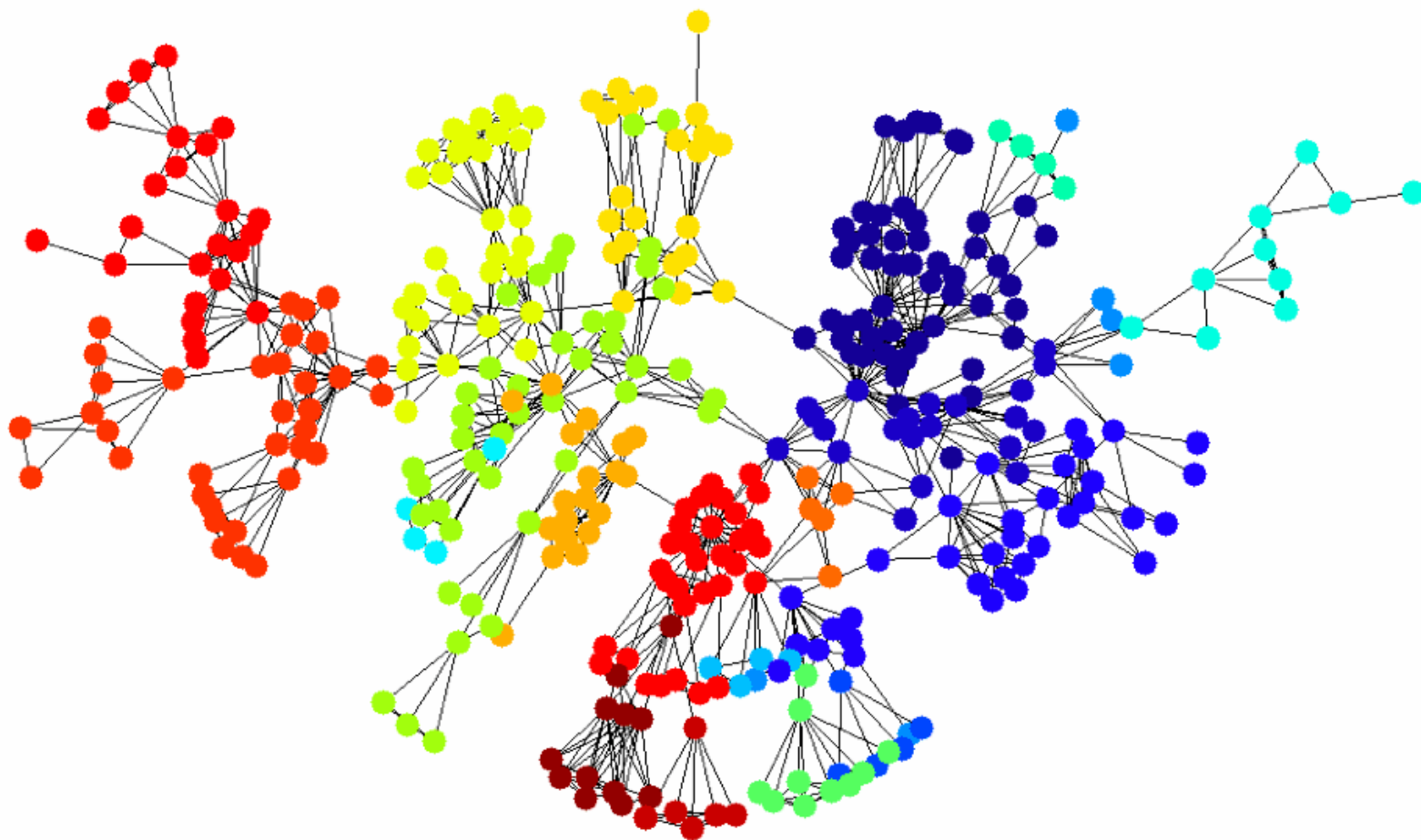


The Value of Community

- What's the value of a community?
 - Getting customer feedback
 - Members supporting members
 - Branding and Reputation
 - Supports viral acquisition
 - Monetizable!
- Some downsides
 - It's not easy!
 - Takes resources and talent to execute



The Rise of Connected Communities



The Rise of Connected Communities

- Our customers come in via micro-communities (through word-of-mouth)
- Connected communities COMMUNICATE with each other
- You can't fool them, or play divide-and-conquer with them
- This is different from our traditional business/marketing experience!



The Rise of Connected Communities

- So what does it mean?
 - Different skills and tactics are needed to initiate and nurture connected communities
 - Community is not traditional Public Relations
 - Community is not traditional Marketing
 - Community is not traditional Customer Service
 - It's all of these synthesized with applied Sociology/Psychology



My Learning to Date

- The Ombudsman Role
 - a person who acts as a trusted intermediary between an organization and some constituency while representing mostly the broad scope of constituent interests
 - NOT a politician (i.e. professional liar)



**This is the core role of
community management!**

My Learning to Date

- Communication Skills
 - Direct : Megaphone
 - Acting as brand spokesperson
 - Formal communications
 - Indirect: Facilitation
 - Setting up effective communication venues
 - Proctoring team member communication
 - Coaching executive communication
 - Collaborating effectively with marketing/PR



My Learning to Date

- Communication venues
 - Your Website, Newsletter
 - Facebook, Twitter
 - Third party sites
 - Live events
- Moderation/ground rules
 - You must set the rules/mores
 - You must enforcement consistently
 - You get the behaviors you accept



My Learning to Date

- Tools
 - The key to survival along with processes around the tools
 - You can't have enough of them in most cases
 - Every tool should:
 - Improve productivity
 - Improve quality as perceived by players
 - Reduce training and human error



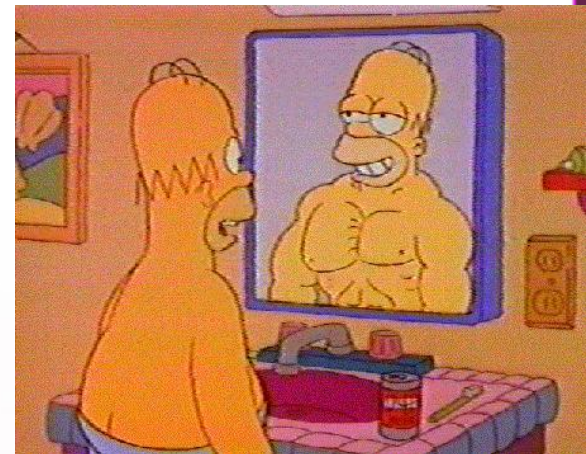
My Learning to Date

- Themes and Consistency
 - Using themes
 - Consistent periodic deliveries
 - Speak to people through stories
- Localize!
 - Let elements within communities diverge, don't go for one size fits all!
 - Except for core brand issues ☺



My Learning to Date

- Reflecting back to the Community
 - Find the best within the community and reflect it back to them!
 - Always show them what you want to see more of
 - Ignore what you want less of
 - One of the hardest things to consistently execute



**Do Not
Feed The
Trolls.**

**Do Not Reply
To This Thread.
Let It Fall To The
Bottom Or Be Locked**



-ninefive

My Learning to Date

- Put Your Best Foot Forward
 - Multiple eyes on every public release
 - Templates for contingencies
 - See “Tools” above!



My Learning to Date

- Two can keep a secret if one of them is dead!
 - Community Management can't lie to the community
 - You can't be a trusted intermediary without credibility
 - 'Slick' doesn't cut it



My Learning to Date

- The community belongs to the members!
 - Players are emotionally invested
 - Respect their feelings
 - Be a champion of the member while communicating the company position/strategy
 - Improving member understanding promotes strong community!



Time to Step Up!

- Community Management needs professional recognition!
- Education and Activism are the order of the day!



Now It's Time to Step Up!

- You aren't given respect, you command respect
- Demonstrate your professionalism, value and expertise



respect



Now It's Time to Step Up!

- Role definition is important – are you a mouthpiece or ombudsman?
- Be the authentic voice of the customer within the company
- DO NOT just be a customer advocate – you must do this within the business context!
- Always put forth your recommendations in the language of the business and brand!



Now It's Time to Step Up!

- Who is on first?
 - Community, Public Relations and Marketing
- You must command an equal seat at the table based on value you bring
- Major non-game companies have Chief Community Officers or VP Community roles
- It is past time for gaming to catch up with this trend!



Call to Action!

- Start a community management organization this year!
- Two potential paths:
 - Union/Guild/Professional Standards organization
 - Independent non-profit membership association
- Either way sharing best practices and knowledge must happen!



Q&A

- Let's talk!

