

Understanding community management for health and wellness projects

What is a community manager?

Once a project has launched on digital platforms and the audience starts to engage, a community manager is responsible for ensuring that audience interactions are timely, valuable and constructive.

Think of the community manager as a bridge between the project and the audience – they are an ambassador to connect with loyal followers and superfans.

When it comes to health and wellness projects, community management isn't a nice-to-have. It is an essential part of the audience development strategy.

What are the day-to-day duties?

- Posting valuable content to channels
(decide early if they will be responsible for creating assets, too!)
- Responding to questions or queries that arise
- Escalating any sensitive replies or comments to the relevant stakeholder
- Hiding, blocking, or dealing with negative comments and abuse
- Building relationships with individual followers of the project
- Researching trends and hot-topics of discussion
- Generating audience trust for the project online
- Growing and maintaining online communities

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Making the most of the role

Assign: One person should be the point of contact across all social channels.

Plan: Ensure a clear and well-defined escalation plan is in place in case sensitive comments or replies occur. The community manager should have a clear protocol for handling sensitive or confrontational comments, and an immediate escalation path to appropriate stakeholders.

Connect: Get in touch with experts in the relevant health area, and discuss best practices for responding to any sensitive comments that may arise.

Learn: Find similar projects, and review their approach to social media.

Support: Your community manager should not be thought of as a therapist, counsellor or health expert. Comments of concern should be referred to a mental health or crisis support service. Your presence across social channels should support audiences, not mislead or confuse.

Inform: If you are making statements or using statistics, ensure that they are coming from up-to-date and reliable sources.

Addressing sensitive content

Health and wellness content is often sensitive in nature. Your project might be dealing with cyberbullying or maternal health, nutrition or domestic violence. Such content can be triggering for audiences who may turn to a project's social media channels for support. It is essential to plan ahead with a solid response plan.

Remember: each channel has a different way of controlling how users can limit their exposure to sensitive content. For example, Twitter allows users to hide sensitive content from their feed. Ensure your community manager understands the opportunities and limitations across each of the channels being used.