

## 4-Week "Hold You By The Hand" Training Program

### • **Week 1: Basic Community Concepts & Strategies**

#### ○ **Welcome**

- Who I am?
  - My story
  - Short history
- Why have I chosen to do this?
- What I expect for you to get from this program
  - Full education regarding communities / engagement marketing
  - In-depth knowledge of web 2.0 and where the internet is going (has arrived)
  - Know what exactly to do to get your community started and how to ensure its success
- How to get the most out of this course
  - Learning Pyramid (national training laboratories, Bethel, Maine)
    - If you're lectured on a topic --- you'll remember 5%
    - If read something --- you'll remember 10%
    - If you hear and see something (audio visual) - 20%
    - If you're demonstrated something - 30%
    - If you discuss something in a group - 50%
    - If you do something (PRACTICE) - 75%
    - If you teach others - 90%

#### ○ **Why build a community?**

- Online community model is where the web is moving towards (or has arrived)
  - Why is every major company moving towards this model (even Cisco buys social networking vendor "Five Across")
- User-generated data eliminates/lessens the cost of good sold
- People have needs to join communities of like-minded individuals
  - Examples
    - Churches
    - Rotary clubs
    - Parent Teachers association
    - Sierra club
    - Alumni organizations
    - Fraternities / Sororities
    - Cultural clubs
    - Tupperware, mary kay
  - People have needs to communicate, express themselves
    - These are needs general sites like myspace cannot fill

People don't come to "niche networks" just because their friends are there, they come because they're passionate about the subject and have a genuine interest.

- There's power in being the facilitator of such interaction
  - Grow mailing list
    - Offer related products and services
    - Charge membership fees
    - Donations, tip jars,
    - Sell affiliate offers
    - Offer ezine solo mailings
    - Offer stratified membership levels
      - Bronze member, silver member, gold member
      - platinum area
  - Advertising
  - Easy surveying, research (better than focus groups)
  - Product ideation
  - Sell to bigger company
- **Niche / target market determination**
  - The rise of the "niche network" era
  - Ways to find community-compatible niche market
    - Rules
      - Instead... DO look for an easily targeted, passionate niche market (and find out where they hang out)

"COMMON CURE FOR COLD" analogy by corey rudl ===== where do you find them?

  - Steps
    - Step 1: Find a large and easy to reach target market
      - Wants vs Needs
      - Car vs Mercedes

Step 2: Connect them together through various web 2.0-related activities (COLLABORATION IS KEY)

Step 3: Push them through the engagement funnel, encouraging them to share, interact / collaborate (the very nature of your community will cause them to pass it on naturally)

Step 4: Have way to monetize with great sales process (either through products/services/backend products/advertisements/exit-plan, acquisition)

- Niche / Keyword Research
  - Google trends
  - Overture
  - [~ KeywordDiscovery.com](#)
  - Software programs
    - Refer to wilsonweb list
    - <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>
- Flycatcher page / technique
  - research niches
  - Find out the "whys"
  - Two reasons people get motivated/interested
    - Avoiding pain
    - Gaining pleasure
- [~ \(various niche examples\)](#)
  - 
  - Activism: Care2, TakingITGlobal
  - Art & Design: Amateur Illustrator, Stuart, Teapotters
  - Auctions: biddingBuddies
  - Books: LibraryThing, Shelfari, Tagabook
  - Cars: CarDomain, CarSpace, Carster, Motortopia
  - Clubbing: AfterTheClub, DontStayIn
  - Comics: ComicSpace, Hypercomics
  - Cooking: BakeSpace, Group Recipes, Open Source Food
  - Cycling: BikeSpace.net, velospace
  - DIY: Curbly
  - Ethnicity: BlackPlanet, Koolanoo, Quespasa, WorldLounge
  - Fashion: ShareYourLook, Shoutfit, Trendmill
  - Fitness: ontri, PlayLocal, Traineo, We Endure
  - Film: Flixster, Yamji
  - Football: Joga
  - Gambling: Gaambol, Gottabet
  - Health: DailyStrength, OrganizedWisdom, RealMentalHealth
  - Hunting: TheHuntZone.com
  - Intelligence: intellectConnect
  - Motherhood: ConnectingMoms, MommyBuzz, MothersClick
  - Music: Hip-Hop.net, Linked Musicians, MakeOutClub, MusicHawk
  - Neighbourhood: ((echo))MyPlace, My Neighbourhoods

- Outdoor activities: MyOutdoors.net, Outdoorzy.com, thooos
  - Parenting: GotKidsNetwork, Minti
  - Pets: Animal Buds, Catster, Dogster, Fuzzster, HAMSTERster, Petster
  - Photography: The Black Stripe
  - Politics: essembly, HOTSOUF.com, My.BarackObama.com
  - Religion: MuslimSpace, MyChurch, OakTreeIdea, ShoutLife, Xianz
  - Rugby: RuggerSpace.com
  - Smoking: Smoking Passions
  - Sports: FanPage, FanNation, FanSpot, Takkle, SportsMates, Ultrafan
  - Trainers: CriticalSole, Sneakerplay
  - Travel: TravBuddy, Travellerspoint, TripConnect, TripUp, WAYN
  - Video games: Gamervision, The Great Games Experiment
  - Wine: Bottletalk, Cork'd, Vinorati
- **How to build community**
    - *Solutions to consider*
      - White Label
        - Hosted Apps
          - ~ [Onesite.com](http://Onesite.com)
            - ~ <http://hearandplaypeople.com/>
          - ~ [Ning.com](http://Ning.com)
            - ~ [GospelCity.com Social Network](http://GospelCity.com)
            - ~ <http://playpiano.ning.com/>
          - ~ [Kickapps.com](http://Kickapps.com)
          - ~ [Crowdvine.com](http://Crowdvine.com)
          - ~ [me.com](http://me.com)
          - ~ [Magnify.net \(video\)](http://Magnify.net)
            - ~ <http://hearandplayvideos.magnify.net/>
            - Very easy to set up (can share advertisement revenue)
          - ~ [Goingon.com](http://Goingon.com)
          - ~ <http://peopleaggagator.com>
          - ~ <http://www.collectivex.com/>
        - Installed Apps/Scripts
          - ~ [BrainSoftpk.com \(my programmer, Younus Awan\)](http://BrainSoftpk.com)

- [~ BuildACommunity.com](#)
    - DIY (Do-It-Yourself)
      - Open Source / CMS Systems on Steroids
        - [~ Drupal.com](#)
        - Mambo
        - Joomla
        - PostNuke
        - [~ Pligg.com](#)
        - [~ BoonEx.com's Dolphin](#)
        - [~ http://www.phpizabi.net/](http://www.phpizabi.net/)
        - [~ Elgg](#)
        - [~ Compare CMS at](#)  
<http://www.cmsmatrix.org/matrix>
      - Off-the-Shelf "MySpace" / "Youtube" Clones
        - [~ Altrasoft E-Friends](#)
        - [~ PhpFox](#)
    - Enterprise Solutions
      - [~ LeverageSoftware.com](#)
      - [~ Iventa.com](#)
      - "Five Across" software platform called "Connect Community Builder" (bought by Cisco)
        - [~ Example: NHL Connect](#)
      - [~ http://www.intronetworks.com](http://www.intronetworks.com)
      - [~ http://socialplatform.com](http://socialplatform.com)
      - [~ http://www.collectivex.com/](http://www.collectivex.com/)
      - [~ http://www.affinitycircles.com/](http://www.affinitycircles.com/)
  - *Where to go*
    - Rentacoder.com
    - Guru.com
    - eLance.com
- **Technical aspects of running a community**
  - Common tasks
    - Content approval
    - Forum moderatorship
    - Spam removal (forums / classifieds)
    - user engagement / participation
    - user modification (password reset for inexperienced users)
  - Servers / hosting
    - Dedicated servers
      - Availability/Reliability
        - 99.9% (3 9's) vs 99.9999% (6 9's)
          - 90% uptime = down 36.5 days / year
          - 95% uptime = down 18.25 days / year
          - 99% uptime = down 3.65 days / year

- 99.9% (3 9's) uptime = down 8.76 hours / year
    - 99.99% (4 9's) uptime = down 52.56 minutes / year
    - 99.999% (5 9's) = down 5.256 minutes / year
    - 99.9999% = down 31.5 seconds / year
  - Rackspace = 99.9999%
  - Hostgator = 99.9%
  - Godaddy = 99.9%
  - Powweb = 99.9%
  - Add servers as site grows
- Shared servers
  - Not really recommended unless budget doesn't allow for dedicated
  - Can get you started but you'll definitely need to switch as you push the envelope

○ **Do's and Dont's of launching a community**

▪ *Do's*

- ***Understanding Robert Cauldini's "Weapons of Influence" (Arizona State University)***
  - *Reciprocity*
    - People feel the need to reciprocate (to give in exchange) when they are given something for free

Since many of the features of your community are free, when time comes to buy a paid membership or course, most people will feel as though they owe you

One can build a sense of indebtedness in someone by delivering a number of uninvited "first favors" over time. Useful information is one of the most valuable favors you can deliver.

- ***Commitment & Consistency***
  - Once we make a decision and that decision is validated by public affirmation, we rarely change our opinion (or we seem inconsistent)

Through public profiles and asking various questions, you can get a user to publicly

commit to an action. My goal is to

\_\_\_\_\_.

Following up and asking them if they've stayed "consistent" with that action leads to compliance.

- *Social Proof / Validation*

- We decide what is correct by noticing what other people think is correct

Especially in ambiguous situations, people tend to look at the actions of others to determine the appropriate mode of behavior

"If everyone else is doing it, it must be correct"

Testimonials, product endorsements, features of other members

- *Liking*

- We often say yes to people we know and like
- Communities allow one to build personal relationships and become transparent to their users
- Constant communication cause stronger comfort level, familiarity, and history

- *Authority*

- People obey authority figures because they think authorities know more than they do about certain things

If you are community "face," you are looked up to... you are "celebrity." Anything you say ---GOES!

We are trained to respect authority

The fact that 'x' amount of users have joined your community helps authority principle.

- *Scarcity*

- People frequently assign a higher value to scarce items, and companies that offer

membership products on a limited-time basis know that scarcity commands a higher price

Ideas: First x members become platinum for free. Once community reaches X members, this special "rank"/privileges will no longer be available

Service only free for a little while... then it will cost to join but free members will be grandfathered in

- *Don'ts*

- *Build it and expect everyone to come*

- There is an extremely powerful viral effect once you've built up a good couple of thousand active users. Getting this first generation of users in is the goal.

Grassroots marketing

- *Don't expect everyone to be active on their own*

- There's an educational aspect in the beginning, then social proof and user interaction kicks in
    - Show how to do key things using online training videos (camtasia) or little "help" pop-ups
    - Use snag-it to demonstrate various areas of the site as screen shots
    - Be active yourself or hire someone to keep things moving in the beginning
      - Hot forum discussions (even controversial)
      - Encourage user interaction
      - Encourage user ownership (get them to commit by posting profile or blog note or creating group)
    - Promote some type of contest or points/rewards system

- *Control it to death*

- Web 2.0 = user control

Participation = sense of ownership / users embrace what they help create

Balance order but allow users to be free (rule of thumb: greater good for the greatest amount of users)

Create environment where people feel comfortable participating

"Controversy sells"

- *Make it too complicated*
  - I'm guilty of this sometimes
  - Too many features too fast; time release
  - Too many choices / options
- *Don't take things too personal*
  - users will talk

don't feel offended on every little thing they say

because of your authority and likeability and rapport, other committed users will come to the "rescue" to defend you

○ User engagement

- **Engagement tunnel - Community membership is not an event, it's a process.**

- Stranger > passer-by > lurker > participant > regular > site evangelist

- ***From stranger to passer-by***

- *Goal: To make potential members aware of your community*

*Stranger = person who has no knowledge of your community and the benefits it offers*

*Passer-by = person who has received first exposure to your community, which sparks their interest, but doesn't join*

Focus on building content (or having it created for you) that will attract members and publicize that content (articles databases, press releases, social news sites)

New community: Write a regular newsletter highlighting your site and community

Idea: House already-written content in the community so after prospective members

read content, they can explore further features of community

- **From passer-by to lurker**
  - *Goal: Move the passer-by into the community areas of your site*

*Lurker = users who've joined or entered community areas but merely read or observe ongoing discussion and activity without participating in it.*

Make sign up process very easy

Provide some type of online "premium" (prize/gift) that's only available to members

- Use in conjunction with scarcity
- First x members receive XYZ

create "small steps" for encouraging participation

- Post survey for them to fill out in community
- invite to take part in forum discussion
- point people to your community through your follow-up/autoresponder efforts

- **From lurker to participant**
  - *Goal: Transform a passive reader/observer into a participant*

*Participant = Someone who takes any action (examples: posts in forum, creates user profile, comments on another user's profile, participates in polls, etc)*

Community should be welcoming as possible

Send an email to new members within 24 hours (welcome them, give pointers on getting started, send them tips, suggest

places they may participate, show videos on how to do cool things, etc)

Make discussions as welcoming/accessible as possible. Have moderators that invite others' opinion so people feel like they can get in on the discussions. It shouldn't be "too" technical or make people feel like they have to be a certain type of user to join in

Allow openings in discussions for people to add their thoughts / open-ended questions / what else do people think / If discussions seem dominated by bigshot members, add something like ---- "...ok enough of the philosophical stuff... any down to earth additions to this discussion?"

Encourage newcomers to experiment with their profiles... or engage them by sending a comment (reciprocity principle will often times cause them to send one back)

Encourage other community members to greet new members

Encourage sense of ownership by using words like "your profile..." "your space..." "your blog"

- ***From participant to regular***
  - *Goal: Encourage non-regular participants to become active "regulars" (with daily log-ins and constant interaction)*

*Regular = someone who participates regularly, logs-in multiple times a week (if not daily), and interacts with a measurable amount of users (provides constant value for community)*

Encourage user ownership

- Promote profile (have contests)

- Promote blogs (point out noteworthy blog notes)
- Promote groups ... encourage members to create their OWN group
- ALL ABOUT THEM... give up control

Solicit help: Being over-efficient, at some point, will work against your community. Find things you DON'T do well, and let your members know that you need help in those areas. Give control of various areas to users who are interested. Expand these inefficiencies so members can step in and help (there is a balance, however).

Encourage users to write articles ... their own column... their own newsletter (give moderatorship abilities to certain users)

Connect people together by pointing out their similarities (either by some automated area on main page or by hand)

- ***From participant to site evangelist***
  - *Goal: Encourage regular, active members to become site evangelists sharing the site with others (as though it's their own)*

*Site evangelist = highest level of ownership, shares site with others, refers to community as a "family"*

Make it easy for members to pass on site

Give them links and banners to promote their "PROFILE" --- "Visit my other profile at hearandplayzone.com"

Give them their own website  
url: [www.yoursite.com/pages/USERNAME](http://www.yoursite.com/pages/USERNAME)

Encourage users to tell others by using automated import addressbook features

Run contests in conjunction with import address book capabilities ... like "100,000th member drive"

Encourage members to create groups. Anyone who moderates/creates a group will want to GROW their own group.

Find ways to get users to blog about various topics. Anyone who uses blogs will want them to be seen.

Feature highly active members in prominent area of site

Give points/rewards for a activity points over certain threshold

- **Why some communities fail**

- *Wrong niche*
  - hard to get people together to have a "pity party"
  - sensitive information
  - Private condition / negative stigmatization
- *Wrong approach*
  - Getting entrepreneurs to share their top strategies vs getting them to share lifestyles, dreams, goals, like-mindedness
- *No initial momentum*
  - *No strong efforts to attract first couple thousand*  
*"ACTIVE MEMBERS:" ==> "If you build it, they will come" myth*
- *No seeding (the initial information that will attract people).*
  - Just enough info to attract people to the site and allow them to build on whatever you have in order to reach their goal

Not enough seeding? People will initially come but see there is nothing and quickly leave

Overseeding? People will initially come but quickly get overwhelmed with the amount of content there, and feel that they cannot contribute as a result, and leave

- *Failure to push certain amount of members to "evangelists"*
  - Pareto principle
    - 20% of users will be responsible for 80% activity
    - Probably more like 10% / 90% (will vary)
- *Missing personality*

- **Week 2: Community Integration & Internet Marketing Strategies/Tactics**
  - Month-by-Month Community Evolution
  - Community / Internet Marketing Integration Pre-Launching / First 7-Day Success
  -
- **Week 3: Traffic and Viral Growth Strategies**
  - Peer-to-Peer interaction & growth
  - Viral marketing to force user promotion
  - Power of web 2.0 tactics
    - Social bookmarking
    - Social news sites
    - Wikis
  - Engagement marketing
  - Non-traditional traffic generation techniques
- **Week 4: Content, User Management, and Monetization**
  - Converting users to paid membership subscribers
  - How to get content written for you