

Building rapport, preventing uproar: being a Community Manager in 2023

In recent years, the role of the community manager within UK startups has become increasingly important. A community manager acts as a liaison between a company and the wider public, managing interactions with the customer base, building relationships, and developing customer loyalty.

At Maddyness, we have recently launched [our job board](#) to connect the right people with the right roles. As part of our commitment to shed some light on what these roles mean, we're talking to professionals at the coalface. This week, we dug into the role of community manager.

The community manager is in essence a walking, talking fleshy embodiment of the company. To say you need to 'live and breathe' the company's values to do this job is an understatement: you *are* the company's values.

Community, community, community

The role of the community manager has become increasingly important in recent years as UK startups have sought to build and maintain relationships

with their customer base. The success of a business relies on the collective effort of its community. In today's contributor economy, many individuals such as test users, industry peers and influencers form an integral part of the community that is essential for a startup's success.

Arguably, it is often the case that these individuals are not compensated fairly for their contribution. Old approaches of providing one-off gifts to the community are no longer sufficient, and founders are increasingly recognising their ethical and business duty to ensure the long-term success of the community they have helped to shape.

As an example, innovative UK businesses such as Yoyo Wallet and Revolut have implemented reward schemes that recognise and reward their users' loyalty, allowing them to benefit from their continued involvement in the company. With such initiatives being commonplace, it is clear that founders are taking responsibility for rewarding their communities in an equitable manner.

The rise in crowdfunding – *examples include ZOE* and Brewdog – evidence the potentially lucrative nature of allowing your community to actively become part of your business' 'journey', and the desire to be more than a consumer.

The role in 2023

The growth of social media has created an expectation among customers that companies will be engaging regularly, providing customer service and responding quickly to queries. It is therefore essential that startups have a member of staff dedicated to managing customer relationships.

The responsibilities of a community manager can vary from company to company. Generally, it involves moderating online conversations, responding to customer queries, monitoring customer sentiment and developing customer loyalty. They will also be responsible for creating and maintaining relationships with influencers, such as bloggers and online personalities, and for managing brand reputation. It is also important for community managers to remain up to date with the latest developments within their industry, as well as any relevant changes in regulations.

The strategic importance of the role of community manager cannot be underestimated. A good community manager can help to build trust and loyalty among customers, as well as create a positive brand image. They can also help to drive sales and increase customer engagement, as well as helping to identify potential new customers.

The role of community manager has become increasingly sophisticated in recent years. As well as managing customer relationships, community

managers are now expected to be able to analyse customer data, create campaigns, and use this data to inform decision making. Community managers are also expected to be able to move quickly to respond to customer complaints and queries.

With this in mind, we decided to reach out to Cowboy – the connected electric bike for urban riders – to ask how they view the community manager role, given they are currently hiring for one. We asked their comms director Amy Grimshaw what the key strategic aims of a community manager were, and how these are changing.

‘For us, the community manager’s role is to be the champion of our customers. At Cowboy we have always prioritised our riders, through best-in-class customer service and offerings such as door-to-door test rides and mobile mechanics that make using Cowboy seamless for our community.

This individual will act as an advocate of our fans, and our almost 1000 unofficial fan groups across Europe, to formalise their voice in our product roadmap and create engaging on and offline experiences that bring everyone together.

We make continuous improvements to our bikes even after purchase through software updates and innovations, adding to the long-term value of owning a Cowboy. As we continue build and grow the brand, we want to involve our customer’s voices as much as possible to ensure we are exceeding their needs. We are excited to have this person in place that will help us bring this vision to life’

Could I do it?

As Amy’s overview demonstrates, candidates for the role of community manager should have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, the ability to think strategically, and a good understanding of customer psychology. They should also have experience of working with social media, as well as the ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously. You should really love building new relationships every day, and feeling energised from that process. An ability to instantly build a rapport is going to come in handy.

The role of community manager is essential for any UK startup, or forward-looking company that is keen to involve their customer’s in their journey. It is a role that requires a range of skills, from communication and customer service to data analysis. As the role of the community manager continues to evolve, it is essential that companies recruit the right candidates for the job.

If this sounds like just the ticket, then check out our jobs board [here](#) – where

there are many Community Manager roles featured.

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