



IDEATION  
COMMUNITY CANVAS

The Community Canvas is a framework that will help you build and run a new community, or analyse and improve an existing community. It identifies the fundamental themes to cover and helps you ask the right questions. "Community" means something different to every person. This tool is designed for practitioners who are building communities in their daily life and to provide a space for an interactive conversation to meet peers and learn from each other. The workshops can also be valuable for people who are considering building communities and want to better understand the basics.



**FORMAT**  
Template



**TIMEFRAME**  
1.5-2 hours



**GROUP SIZE**  
6



**FACILITATION LEVEL**  
Advanced



**REQUIRED MATERIALS**  
Template, Markers, Post-its

STEPS

1

**Identity.** The first part of the Canvas focuses on questions of belief. Strong communities have a clear and explicit sense of who they are, why they exist and what they stand for. The Identity section itself is layered like an onion. At its core are two elements: the community's purpose and the identity of its members. The questions why and who are quintessential and then inform the other elements of identity: the organization's values, its definition of success and its brand.

2

**Experience.** The second part of the Canvas explores the community from the perspective of the members: what does actually happen in the community and how does it translate its purpose into activities that create tangible value for the members? A significant part of the Canvas is dedicated to two elements: Shared Experiences bring members together and fundamentally deepen the bonds among them. Rituals and traditions are individual and recurring experiences that have a strong symbolic character.

3

**Structure.** The third part of the Canvas focuses on the operational elements of running a community. While many communities evolve organically over time, only a few survive in the long-term. Organizational aspects are often neglected, and the necessary structures aren't in place to deal with challenging situations, as they eventually and often suddenly come up. This area goes beyond good management and processes, but presents an tremendous opportunity: most communities become more valuable the longer they exist, as trust both among the members and into the overall brand increases. However, consistency is the key. Visionary communities will put structures in place that will optimize for long-term stability.

Benefits

- Creating meaningful, long-lasting relationships.
- Building and running communities.
- Bringing people together and developing a sense of ownership and belonging.

Tips

- Bring not only the canvases, but also the 'guidebook' and 'summary' for participants. Host a brief presentation to introduce participants to the three elements in the canvas: identity, experience & structure.
- The Minimum Viable Community Canvas is good for the blue and pink sections: identity & experience. However, the green section (structure) is especially important for more advanced/late stage community stages and should be explored further than what is presented in the template.
- There is also a 28-page worksheet document that can be used to make a much more detailed planning than what you are likely to have time for in a workshop setting. Set the stage using the compressed templates (Minimum Viable Community and Worksheet Summary) during the workshop, and provide the worksheet document for participants to explore the topics further in more detail after the workshop.

Sources

1. Community Canvas