

Contribution Lifecycle

This document seeks to define the process by which a Mozilla team becomes a community contribution area. The process is broken down into phases which, in our experience, communities go through as they develop, and includes milestones and resources for growing and supporting Mozilla communities. We expect that each client group (team?) will come to us at different phases of the lifecycle. We will support each of them based on our assessment of where in the lifecycle they are, and what structure and framework will help them reach the highest potential for contribution.

Each phase of the lifecycle is designed to meet the client at their point of need and to provide a framework on which they can build.

In the community building context, an “Activator” is a dedicated community building resource from the team. This person’s work shifts in each phase of the lifecycle.

1. Pre-Work

Definition

In this stage teams are completely unfamiliar with working with contributors, do not understand the value of doing so, and have significant concerns or roadblocks to beginning the process.

Learning Stage

Unconsciously Incompetent

Measure of Success

We will know that the client is ready to move to the next phase when a dedicated staff resource has been appointed to work with us. This person is known as the community coordinator or activator.

Milestones

- Attend *Getting Ready for Participation* workshop. This can be done in modules.
- Understand each stage of the community building lifecycle and have clear expectations of how progression through each cycle works. Has walked through storyboards of community lifecycle, as well as the lifecycle of community building.
- Understand the community building pillars and how their team’s work can connect to those pillars.
- Staff person from team commits to acting as community coordinator (activator) and agrees to work with their CBT partner.

Resources

- Getting Ready for Participation Workshop Modules
 - What's possible?
 - Active vs Passive Transparency Exercise
 - Communication Channels, and how/when to use them
 - Action Plan for Next Steps
- Video on the impact of working with contributors-- we need this to be made-- can a contributor make it, possibly working through Dia and her video producers?
- Info on where they can go to ask questions/field concerns-- Consumable "contact us" documentation
- Get involved page tutorial, how it works, how to get connected
 - Way to reach out to specific locales and skill sets to get the things your community needs.

Activator role in this stage

In this stage, the activators are identified. This staff member partner is committed to bootstrapping participation in their area of the project. This commitment should be reflected in the performance goals for the person taking on this role.

CBT Role

During the pre-work stage, the CBT partner does the following:

- Helps partner team to understand the the community building lifecycle and the community building pillars.
- Helps partner team connect with a Designing for Participation workshop.
- Works with team's manager and other decision makers to support the appointment of a community coordinator (activator).

Risks

At this stage the risk is that they will remain resistant to inviting contributors into their part of the project.

Despite an activator being identified, that they are not empowered by their managers to take action, and they are not given resources or team support to be effective.

The Activator role is tacked on "in addition" to other work, and can be de-prioritized.

2. Starting

Definition

At this stage clients don't have volunteers yet and they are committed in building a community around what they are doing.

Learning Stage

Unconsciously Incompetent

Measure of Success

Documented pathway with people to manage incoming contributors must be built for a partnership in this phase to be considered a success.

Milestones

- Pathway(s) created working with your CBT partner
- Prototype Pathway-Small number (up to 20) people are actively in pathway, and it can be iterated on.
- Connected to one of a major funnel, Get Involved, Newsletters, What Can I Do for Mozilla?
- Activators have clear understanding of their roles

Resources

- [What Makes a Healthy Pathway](#) This wiki page serves as a guide for developing a pathway and collection of best practices from existing Mozilla contribution pathways. A pathway is a living process to be iterated on in every phase of the lifecycle.
- Communities of practice can start with different intents. For instance, an exploratory study by the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC)⁶ found four different strategic intents for forming communities for professionals on different teams or locations:
 - to help each other solve everyday work problems in their discipline,
 - to develop and disseminate a set of best practices,
 - to develop and steward the tools, insights, and approaches needed by members in field assignments, and
 - to develop highly innovative solutions and ideas.
- Although most communities serve more than one purpose, communities tend to focus on one and adapt the structure, roles, and activities most suited to that intent. Then they fit other activities into the structures. Pathways are a first step in defining contribution opportunities to the intent of the community.

- David Eaves Workshop: Designing for Participation:
https://wiki.mozilla.org/Contribute/Workshops/Designing_for_participation
- David Eaves Workshop: Identifying Contributors
https://wiki.mozilla.org/Contribute/Workshops/Identifying_contributors
- Taken from :[Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge](#).

Activators perform a number of key functions across the lifecycle:

- Identify important issues in their domain.
- Plan and facilitate community events. This is the most visible aspect of the coordinator role. Informally link community members, crossing boundaries between organizational units and brokering knowledge assets.
- Foster the development of community members.
- Manage the boundary between the community and the formal organization, such as teams and other organizational units.
- Help build the practice—including the knowledge base, lessons learned, best practices, tools and methods, and learning events.
- Assess the health of the community and evaluate its contribution to members and the organization

Activator role in this stage

- Define Activities for participation and act as content expert for defining and developing the pathway.
- Demonstrate the value of community-- create ways to measure contributions
- Test the pathways prototypes
- Establish trust with fledgling community members by shepherding them through the pathways and establishing clear methods and channels for communication that allow information to flow in both directions.
- Prepare contribution opportunities so they can be connected to a funnel.

CBT Role

- Provides ongoing strategic support in the definition of activities for participation
- Connects activator to ways to start connecting to initial community members with specific skill sets beyond contribution funnels.

Risks

Awaiting your awesome input!

3. Learning and preparing for growth

Definition

Clients at this stage have connected with some volunteers and are interested in learning about how to build on what is working and laying the groundwork for scaling.

Learning Stage

Consciously Incompetent

Measure of Success

New contributors (roughly more than 25) must be moving into/through the pathway and getting connected to opportunities

Milestones

- Identify gaps and inefficiencies in the pathway
- Optimize Contribution pathway
- Create or connect to systems that will measure progress in pathways (THIS IS WHERE SYSTEMS AND DATA COMES IN)
- Define and track Casual/Active/Core Conversion points as part of pathways
- Document Community Practices
- Develop Core Community
- **Identify Community “Librarian” or Record Keeper** Empower Community members into the roles of community Librarians
 - Creating community resources and organizing materials into the community’s taxonomy
 - Helping activator identify the gaps in that knowledge
 - Taking and editing notes at community meetings
 - Connecting community members with others experts in the field and in the organization.

Resources

Awaiting your awesome input!

Activator role in this stage-- Changes to “Community Management” THEY WILL NEED HELP HERE!

- Needs to start delegating work to community members and other team resources to accomplish milestones.
- The key domain issue as a community grows is defining its role in the organization and its relationship to other domains.
- Maintain community focus to core purpose. Encourage innovation that leads to purpose, find outlets for innovation that is distracting from the purpose of the community.
- The key practice issue at this point shifts from simply sharing ideas and insights to organizing the community’s knowledge and taking stewardship seriously.
- As the community develops a stronger sense of itself, the core members frequently begin to see gaps in the community’s knowledge, identify its cutting edge, and feel a need to be more systematic in their definition of the community’s core practice.”

CBT Role

- Help activators and teams understand opportunities to connect **at scale** and create plan to start advertising their contributions opportunities.
- Help Activators on defining their contributor personas (what the people most likely to be interested in contributing are doing/learning/motivated by) and help them plan for ways to connect to them directly through events, outreach, and and and...
-

Risks

Activator has trouble or feels overwhelmed because they aren't delegating

There are no trusted community members to delegate to.

The systems and data could be blocked technically or politically, or by bullshit.

4. Scaling

Definition

Clients have volunteers involved in their project and they'd like to turn up the dial on participation. Teams in this stage, having a few core contributors and many active contributors, are ready to steward their communities through on-going, significant growth.

Learning Phase

Consciously Competent

Core activities

recruit members, recruit and develop new core contributors and leadership, build relationships with other teams, communicate w/ org frequently about progress.

Measure of Success

Teams have established ways to sustain momentum (mentoring new contributors, developing leadership, etc.) and have demonstrated a 10x increase in active contributors. [I really want something in here about measuring leadership.]

(This stage is the minimum target for all high leverage partnerships.)

Milestones

- new core members are actively recruited and mentored
- contributors are given the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills
- community establishes a synergistic relationship with other teams/communities
- there is regular communication with the project about what impact the community is having

Resources

Awaiting your awesome input!

Activator role in this stage

Community manager along with core contributors are responsible for:

- establishing a visible channel for the community to communicate its work to the organization
- implement a plan for recruiting and mentoring new members
- implement a plan for identifying and developing new leaders
- establish a relationship with one or more outside teams or communities
- continuing to document community practices, to measure community contribution and to optimize the contribution pathway

CBT Role

Works with community coordinator and core contributors to:

- help to establish a channel in which community can communicate to the organization
- consult on plans for recruiting and developing new members
- consult on plans for recruiting and developing leadership

Risks

Community coordinator will not be able to bring in new core contributors and leadership prior to running out of resources to sustain community.

Community coordinator and core contributors will not successfully balance sense of ownership with openness.

Gaps in the contribution pathway that affect growth will not be identified and/or addressed in order to facilitate sustained growth.

5. Sustaining

Definition

At this stage community active and stable and is interested in keeping that momentum growing and retaining key contributors.

stable and adapting

Learning Stage

Unconscious Competence

Core activities

rejuvenate and renew, recruit new core members, develop new leadership, build relationships with other teams, have a significant voice.

Measure of Success

Teams will have optimized their pathways based on data and we will see contribution jump again (and we will have created a case study of the team).

Ideal contribution jump metric is currently undefined, and will be determined by what is happening in ""scaling.""

Milestones

- the community's voice is heard and is influential organization-wide
- community energy is maintained through renewal activities
- the community positively impacts top-line team goals on an on-going basis

Resources

Awaiting your awesome input!

Activator role in this stage

- bringing new energy into the community when needed by having rejuvenating activities and events. These can be meetups, talks, etc.
- establishes and maintains the community as an influencer within the organization

CBT Role

- help to establish an influential voice across the organization by acting as a champion
- brainstorm ways to rejuvenate the community
- provide resources and strategic support for ongoing community issues such as conflict management, consensus building, cultural issues, etc

Risks

Organization will not actively support community growth by not allowing community to gain influence and voice.

Community coordinator will not be able to rejuvenate community and bring in new core contributors and leadership prior to running out of resources to sustain community.

SANDBOX

(put things here that we want to keep for a bit but probably don't belong in the body of the document)

Activator Role= sustaining through change as the community grows

Actively stewarding a body of knowledge involves maintaining a balance between the tensions of ownership and openness. It is key for the community coordinator and core group members to identify opportunities to take on new challenges, expand the community's focus, and incorporate new perspectives.

- Keep community lively and engaging
- Offers ownership and openness to community members
- Institutionalizing and rejuvenating
- Develops and recruit leadership-- so that they do not have to do all this work themselves
- Mentorship-- creates both structure and possibility for mentorship and growth
- Visibility-- shares the work the community is doing with the broader project and allows the drivers of that work the credit for it.