

Best practices in mobile multiplayer communities

A developer perspective

In partnership with NIMBLY



A thriving community is a huge asset for a game, but can be a challenge to develop and maintain.

Google Play partnered with research agency Nimble to get a developer perspective on best practices around community management for mobile multiplayer games.



We found

10 Key principles

but these are just guidelines, and every community has unique needs, so adjust your best practices accordingly.

The value of community management:



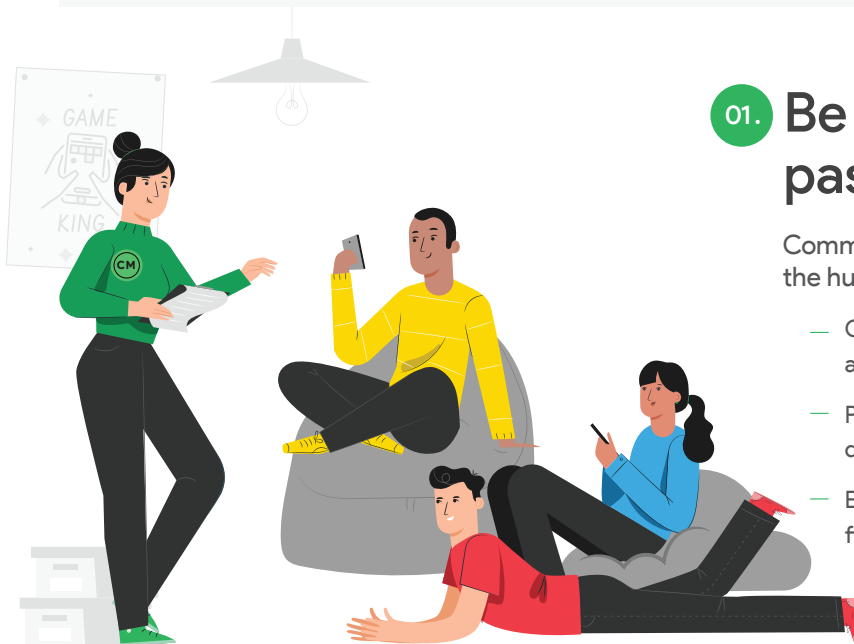
Developers gain

- Authenticity
- Retention
- Feedback



Players gain

- Confidence
- Entertaining content
- Communication with devs



01. Be authentically passionate and human

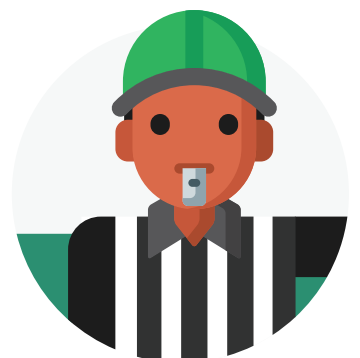
Community management is about authentically handling the human relationship a studio has with its audience.

- Consider CM candidates who are passionate - ideally already a huge fan of your genre.
- Provide an opportunity for real human connection and discussion.
- Ensure community management's goal of putting players first is respected when working with other departments.

02. Be present and proactive to foster trust and safety

Good community management removes toxicity without limiting passionate discussions:

- Proactively create clear, easily visible rules for how players should engage on a channel.
- Know how and when to engage - no need to respond to everything!
- Empower the community to self regulate with volunteer moderators and reporting systems.
- Be aware that critical players can be your most passionate and should not always be equated with 'trolls' or 'troublemakers'.



03. Know your player types and what they need from the community



Though variable from game to game, we found 3 main player types with different goals and needs:

Superfans

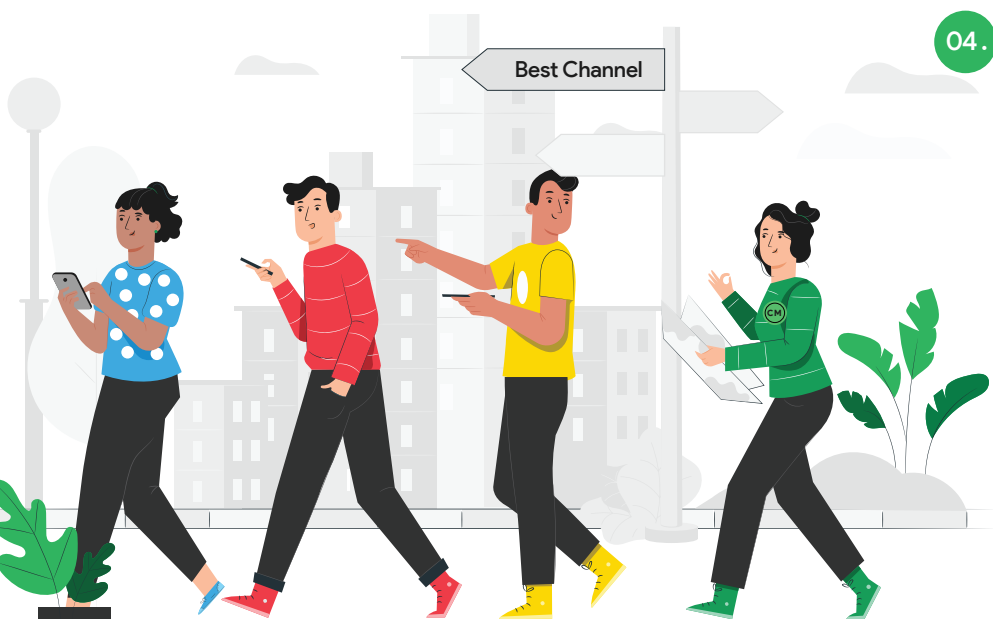
Incredibly passionate and desirous of deeper knowledge, breaking news and the opportunity to talk. A lot.

Middle engaged

Enjoy the game and keep up to date with news, but tend to let others lead the conversation.

Peripheral players

May follow the news but want top-level summaries. Might read posts and threads, but rarely respond.



04. Let your community guide you to the right channels

- Identify where the community already exists and be there early. As soon as you have a community, ask them where and how they would like to engage.
- Some channels are for general discussions with minimal supervision, others are more formal and need a closer eye. Ensure each has an articulated strategy and the right resources.

05. Don't forget your content essentials

While we encourage you to be inventive, certain content types are often seen as essential:

- Game content releases
- New feature releases
- Highly desired game changes
- Content by influencers or key opinion leaders

To boost visibility and penetration, let the community know key announcements are coming a few days before.

Change content according to the maturity of the game, but don't forget that new players will always need a place to start!





06. Leverage your community to create and source content

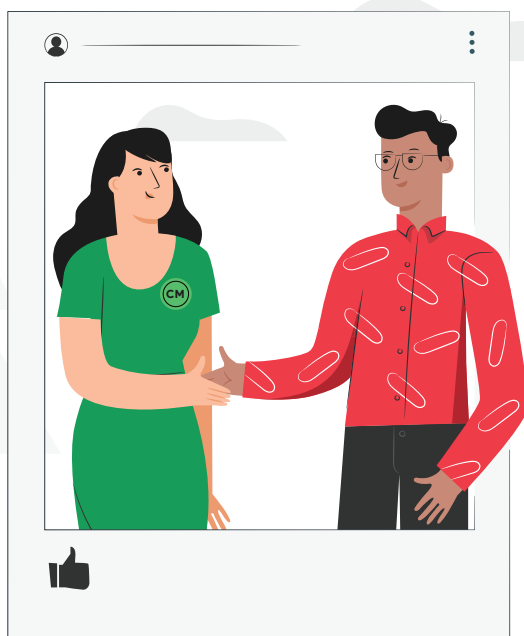
While in-house assets will often be essential, why not leverage some of the fantastic content your community produces? Make it easy to create content and incentivize content creation.

- Create in-game tools for quickly taking and sharing content like screenshots or clips.
- Create community initiatives that reward players for developing content.
- Support player Wikis and other fan sites.

07. Remember that small actions can yield high levels of engagement

Simple posts that directly interest the player can be incredibly successful.

- Leverage 'reaction polls' to boost reach.
- Take the most exciting in-game element (e.g. 'story' or 'battles') onto social.
- Engage players in healthy debate or votes.
- Highlight players' accomplishments.



08. Develop tailored partnerships with different community members

Some players are passionate enough to become partners. Many types exist, and you can benefit by supporting each according to their needs.

- Vocal forum voices may make good mods
- Precise thinkers and writers make fantastic wiki editors
- Creative, charismatic players should be encouraged to create content on the game.



Top tips

- These members can only approximate the overall community. Don't ignore your other sources.
- The best opinion leaders are honest and upfront - not diehard fans.
- A direct line of communication makes for faster feedback and fosters understanding.
- Only form partnerships you can dedicate enough time to. Unmanaged partnerships can do more harm than good!

09. Be ready to action feedback and let players know you've listened



Taking action on feedback to improve the game and promoting these changes is the ultimate expression of good community management, but be careful...

Only ask for feedback if you are **ready to act on it** and be sure to let players know if you do.

Our research shows that only around

10% of the most passionate players

offer visible feedback - they may not represent the entire audience.

Use a variety of feedback mechanisms, e.g.:

- In-game polls
- Super-testers
- Live streams



10. Don't expect a single success metric

Be aware of the challenges around community measurement - it is difficult to pin down and easy to misinterpret results. It can be useful to look at 4 key metrics:

- Engagement with posts - responses and reactions
- Channel growth - followers and subscribers
- Quantitative sentiment - a rough 'X% positive' metric
- Qualitative sentiment - a CM report on the overall mood

Insights by

NIMBLY

Nimbly is a global insights agency on a mission to make empathy more accessible (and fun).
www.nimblyinsights.com