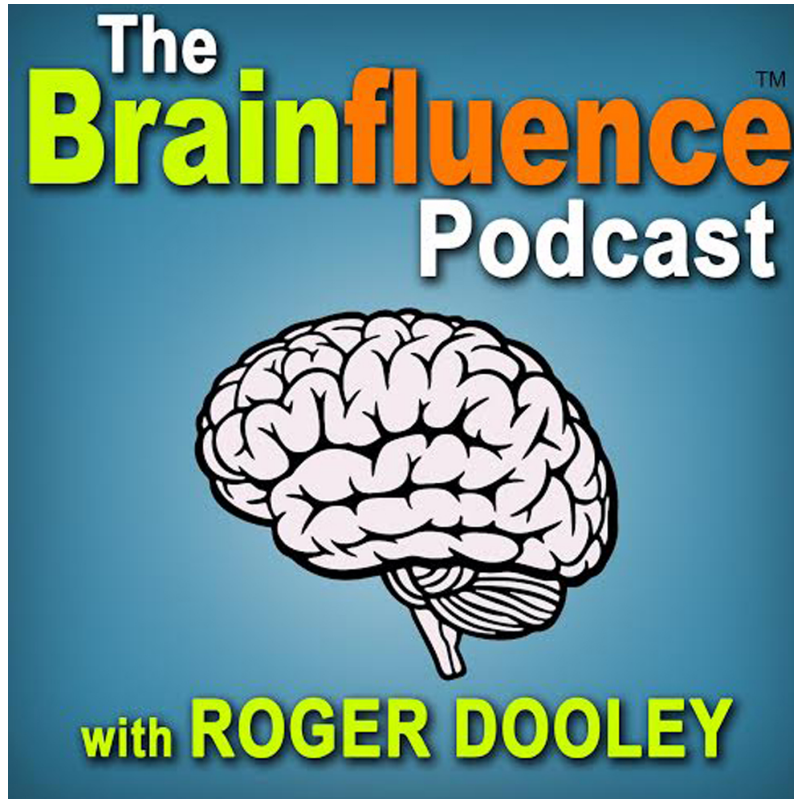


**Supercharge Your Business, Brand, and Teams with
Jono Bacon**

<https://www.rogerdooley.com/jono-bacon-people-powered>



Full Episode Transcript

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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](https://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction), or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley. I've been interested in community building for at least 20 years. Even in the earliest days of the Internet, I was participating in communities on CompuServe and Prodigy. When the web we know today took over, I was a member, moderator, and admin in various online forums.

In 2001, I started a community college confidential which grew to tens of millions of monthly page views, so I'm excited to be joined today by one of our leading experts in building communities, Jono Bacon. Jono is the founder of Jono Bacon Consulting, which provides community and management advice. He previously served as the director of community at GitHub, Canonical, XPRIZE, and Open Advantage. Jono is the author of the new book People

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Powered: How Communities Can Supercharge Your Business, Brand, and Team. Welcome to the show, Jono.

Jono Bacon: Hey, Roger. It's great to be here. Thanks for having me on.

Roger Dooley: Jono, we've both been around online communities for quite a while. Is it more difficult than ever to build a community today? I mean, we both write at Forbes and they dropped their commenting process, which was maybe not a great community, but it was somewhat of a community where readers could interact with each other and the writers. Facebook is just getting crushed by moderation issues and such. Are things different today?

Jono Bacon: I actually think that spinning up communities is probably easier than it's ever been before for a few different reasons. One is that particularly, the commoditization of technology has been profound in recent years. People are walking around with a smartphone in their pocket. The price of internet access has dropped significantly, especially in developing nations. People have got a communicator in their pocket that they can get connected to with other people. People have been running local communities for many, many years, but we often discover those local in-person communities online, too.

I also think that the way in which we engage and see brands and companies is changing. Years ago, you go buy a product from a company and that'll be about it and you don't even really engage with them via their customer support line. These days, I think people are expecting that there is more of a relationship with the brands that they

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spend time with. We've seen many examples of this: Fitbit, Salesforce, various others doing this.

I think what you're seeing when you mentioned, for example, the Facebook moderation piece, is because people are so connected, because there's been such an influx of people getting connected, we're also dealing with challenges of scale and how to deal with very large communities and dealing with people who live in a world where everybody's got a megaphone and how they utilize that megaphone. I think the opportunity is there better than ever before, but I think it's also, like with anything, it's presenting some challenges that we need to figure out as well.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Jono, maybe this is a softball question, but I think it's important, too: What kind of businesses can benefit from creating and growing a community?

Jono Bacon: It's really a broad number of businesses have seen great results with communities. I mean, communities are really fundamentally just a group of people who get together who share a common interest. Many people would be familiar with communities, again, locally, the knitting clubs, book clubs, things such as that. We've seen communities forming online in places like Star Trek communities and cooking communities.

The businesses that tend to do quite well out of this are where you've got a set of customers who care about a product and getting the most out of that product. I'll give you an example. There's a company based in New

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Hampshire called Fractal Audio Systems. They basically make musical equipment and they have a product called an Axe-Fx and it's a very complicated piece of kit that basically simulates guitar amplifiers. They've got an incredibly enthusiastic community of people who come together to talk about how to tune it, how to configure it, how to get sounds out of it that sound like their favorite guitar amps by their favorite artists. Fractal Audio themselves, they engage very closely with their community, they ship new releases and upgrades and things like that.

Communities like that tend to thrive because the community provides this unlimited, always-on support network of people who can provide guidance and input for how to do this. We've also seen this with Salesforce are a wonderful example of this. They've got hundreds of local groups all over the world. They've got a huge online community that's done this because again, they've got a product that people want to get the most out of.

What's interesting as well is one other unexpected flip side of communities is people who are building communities inside of an organization to help become more efficient. For example, I've worked with a number of banks and financial services institutions who have identified that their teams have siloed themselves into these specific buckets and they're not communicating as effectively as they can be and it's lowering their time to market and things like that. Communities are a great way to break that down and build this more collaborative culture inside of the business as well.

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Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, something I'd add to that discussion, too, is I'm sure a few of our listeners are saying, "Well, okay, yeah. If you've got an enthusiastic group of customers who really are excited about the product or what they can do with the product, maybe that's a pretty easy thing."

But what if you make industrial shelving or something people just really don't think about that much? I think even there, there's an opportunity if you want to build a community and leverage it to promote the brand where, okay, you don't want a community about industrial shelving, but about warehouse operations or something where there are a lot of things that can be discussed and there are people who think about that a lot?

You can become the go-to source in your industry for information. I think there are opportunities of all kinds and people basically want to talk to other people who have the same interest. Even if your product or service isn't that interest, your customers probably do have something in common.

Jono Bacon: Absolutely. I mean, I think one of the advantages of building communities is also one of the challenges, which is communities can be applied in a number of different areas and everyone's got their own idea of what a community is. I mean, as an example, I am working with a client right now and we're building one community for their business that's really focused on their customers, on their decision makers, right? That is people who are making decisions about what technology they're using in their firm and all the rest of it.

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Then another community that we're building within that, the people who are implementing the technology that they sell, which is a very different environment, a different kind of problem to solve, but as you say, you can zoom out and you can zoom out into the general area or the vertical that that organization is operating in.

This is actually a technique that a lot of organizations have done, where they generate a consistent drip-feed of content and material and events that can pull people in because of the general interest, but then it provides that brand awareness for the business that they're operating. Yeah, there's a tremendous amount of opportunity.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yep. You have a couple of different kinds of community in your book, Jono. One is the champions model. I want you to explain that one because I think that's something that probably many of our listeners can identify with.

Jono Bacon: I have a fairly small brain and the way my brain operates is I have to zoom all the way out to understand something and then gradually zoom into the detail. When I was writing People Powered, the way I naturally laid the book out was to talk about the value proposition of communities, but then to start breaking it down into pieces and then to zoom into each of those pieces.

One of the first sets of pieces here is there's basically three models for communities that I've seen. All communities fit into this. One is called consumer, then you've got champion, and then you've got collaborator.

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Now, consumer communities of people that get together because they have a shared interest, they're passionate about the same thing. For example, the Trek BBS community is a community of Star Trek fans who come together because they're excited about Star Trek and they usually chat together, but they don't really have much of an influence on the show itself.

Now, champion communities come together and they go the extra mile and they generate a stockpile of content and insight, right? A champion community will have people who create blog posts and videos, they'll organize local events, they'll do tutorials, they'll hang out in discussion forums and answer questions. My example earlier on of Fractal Audio Systems were a good example of a champion community. They don't just have thousands of people who get together to provide guidance and input and how to use the devices or their products, but they also create books and create videos and create tutorials and all this other material.

Then the third model is what I refer to as a collaborator communities, which is where people come together to work on the same thing. A good example of that is the open-source world where technology as we know it's completely shifted over from one organization building the tech to thousands of people all over the world working together on some of those pieces as well. Open-source is now running data centers and electrical grids and cell phones in the Cloud and elsewhere.

Each of those three different models requires some subtle differences in how you approach them. To provide one

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example, if you bring people together in a consumer community, the most important thing is it's super easy to join, kind of like a clubhouse where people can chat to each other. But if you're building a collaborative community where people need to be able to make contributions to a shared project, then you need to have standards of practice around how you do that, requirements around what a good submission looks like, and it gets a little bit more complicated.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I think the champion community is something that we're familiar with from most, say, tech support-type forums or whether they're product-specific or brand-specific or even more general types of things, whether it's for web design or something of that nature where you have a mix of people who have a lot of expertise who tend to be helpful and, ultimately, become champions. Even if they're not creating books and such, they are creating good content on the, assuming it's a web-based forum or similar, creating great content there and helping the newbies who stumble in the door after searching Google for an answer to their question.

Jono Bacon: Well, one of the things that's interesting there is, and I know that on your podcast you talk a lot about the science and the psychology behind things, the reason why these communities work is because they tap into a fundamental set of psychological principles that are important to us as human beings.

When you take away the computers and the screens and the microphones and the cars and everything else, we're

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really animals. As animals, we strive for a sense of belonging and we strive to do work that's got meaning and we're emboldened by validation from our peers and communities deliver all of that in droves.

When you join a community that's well-designed, that's well-structured, you'll often find people who will spend 10-15 years hanging out every week in that community providing insight and ideas and perspectives and time because the community is really, fundamentally, it's a network of minds that provides that insight, time, and ideas.

I think one of the reasons why communities work as opposed to just traditional marketing where you're seeding an audience with a set of messages that you want to convert is a community's got this, there's an amplifier to the social benefits of that community. It's not just an amplifier but it also reinforces those elements as well and it builds that sense of belonging, which makes people want to stick around more.

This can offer massive benefits for business, particularly businesses who want to break into a new market because that community can become an enormous selling point for prospective customers saying, "Okay, well, I can buy this product and I've got this huge resource of people who can help me figure out how to actually use it effectively."

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. That's really critical. I know that when I've looked at software, the first thing I do is look at their support forum or whatever they have of that nature just to see how active it is. You go in and you see

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a lot of unanswered posts that have been there for days, weeks, longer and say, "Okay, this is not going to be a good choice."

Then you go to another one where you can see that not only are people from the company itself helping out but there's other experts who will go the extra mile to explain maybe some workarounds and things that aren't official but can be very helpful to the user. Your point about this being a selling point for any kind of product that might require after-sales support, I think, is really a good one.

Jono Bacon: Right. Yeah, I mean, well, the thing is as well that I think is a subtle element to this is that another, I think psychological element to how we as just human beings engage with each other is that we don't just look at the content of someone's message or the content of what they're doing, but we also look at the tonality in which they're doing it.

I think one of the other benefits of a community is that you get to see how a company engages with its customers because most of the customer engagements that traditional companies would have would be a one-on-one interaction; I've got a problem, I send an email to support at the company dot com, and I get a response back. No one else gets to see that interaction. If you have a good experience there, you might rate the interaction, but you don't generally go and... No one else can see the benefits of that positive interaction, whereas you get that in a community. You get an opportunity to not just get access to insight and ideas and information, but you also get to

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get a sense of that company and how they treat their customers.

That's one of the things I talk about in Power People is for people who are thinking about building a community and they're thinking, "I'll hire a community manager and that person will do all the work," that's not going to work, right? The most successful communities have, sure, the community manager who's helping to facilitate the project, but you need your team members to be actively involved. It needs to be part of their day-to-day in the same way that people will engage with customers because it demonstrates that sense of positive engagement between the company and the community members.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, I think that's great. I think it's also important to note that that's often quite a task. I've been in that situation of trying to add team members to participate in a community where that is not their primary job function and sometimes it works and many times it's difficult. Either they don't quite get the community ethos and behave properly, or the other times they just, "Wow, this isn't really my job. I don't have time to deal with these people." It's worth the effort, though, because when you can get those people involved, too, it creates that shared sense of, "Wow. Hey, we're all working together on this."

Jono Bacon: Yeah. Yeah, like you say, it's tough because one of the challenges I see with a lot of companies just starting to roll out building a community strategy is their employees. The thing that is one of the biggest sticking points is their employees are just nervous. They don't really know what they're supposed to do, what happens if they screw up,

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they don't want to make a mistake in public. Providing a good level of guidance and encouragement and support and reassurance in how you do that is going to be critical to doing that well.

It takes time. It takes time. It's like anything, you're building a muscle, you got to exercise that muscle. I often describe, I mention this in the book, is it's about building a habit. On a different note, I'm going through this right now where I want to lose a little bit of weight. I'm trying to become more organized in terms of my exercise. If you do this regularly for around 66 days, it bakes that habit in.

Essentially, with a lot of communities, what you want to do is earn that browser tab, earn it next to put someone's email where they're checking their email every day, they're checking the community every day.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yep. Just about every community does rely on these experts, champions, whatever you want to call them, that really provide a lot of assistance free to help other people. Do you have any techniques for cultivating those, Jono? Any way of either finding them or bringing along or developing them? Because every community starts from zero. How do you develop these people?

Jono Bacon: Yeah, there's a couple of techniques that I find work generally well across those three different community models that I mentioned earlier. I think the first thing that's important is not just with community, just with anything you do. I think when you're intentional about it, you increase your chances of success, right?

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I think the first thing I would always recommend is before you even think about bringing people in is design the value proposition of your community. What are people going to get out of joining? What is your organization going to get out of it? Put in place an annual set of what I refer to as big rocks, which are meaty objectives for the next year that will put in place your infrastructure, your content, all the necessary bits and pieces that you're going to implement in your strategy. Stay on top of that and make sure you deliver it like you deliver any of the projects in your organization. Like any other project, there needs to be accountability, there needs to be clear metrics in those different pieces.

In terms of how we actually bring people in, there's couple of approaches I would always recommend here. The first thing, step zero, if you will, is to make sure that when you define the types of participation you want to see, which I refer to as personas, such as you might be want people providing help or you might want people generating content or you might want people writing code, make that on-ramp to generate in that first piece of value as simple as possible.

A big mistake a lot of companies make is they go out, they spend a ton of money on advertising, flying around the world to events, doing a ton of social media to bring people into the community, and then it's too hard for people to get started and they get to get bored and move on. You need to make sure that when they line up at the front door of your community, it's dead simple for them to get in and get started. Again, you need to be intentional and thinking about that, like how do they set up any tools

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they need? How do they register? What kind of documentation and guidance do you provide them with?

Now, in terms of actually bringing people in, content is an incredibly powerful driver of this. Putting together a crisp content calendar, I recommend people do this about once every two to four weeks where they say, "We want to ship," for example, "one piece of content a week on our blog. We want to have at least one piece of content on our social media networks every day, but we want to be intentional in what that content is and how it's valuable to our audience."

What will bring people to your community is seeing interesting content and seeing interesting stories of your community as they're forming. For example, you could deliver content, let's say for the sake of argument, you have a web-based service, kind of like a SAS service. The first thing you might want to do is put a load of content out there about new features and what people can accomplish with them, maybe a couple of case studies. Then as people start coming to your community and participating, share success stories of those people participating: "Hey, this person came in and asked this question, this person provided help with this and we've rewarded them in some particular way."

That regular drip-feed of content, what that does is it builds this feedback loop where your prospective community members keep seeing positive information about your company and the community as well. Then bit by bit, that lowers the fear element of them coming into the community and getting started.

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Without getting too tactical, the vast majority of inbound traffic into online communities is through social media and Google, so you want to make sure as well that your social media strategy reflects all of that content and you also want to make sure that you're publishing a lot of material on the web, for example, on blog posts because that gets indexed well and then that brings people in.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). I want to jump back to your ease of onboarding there, but to your last point, having that sort of professionally written or self-written content in addition to all the user-generated content you get in a community I think is a great mix. If you can, I've done this with varying degrees of success and in a couple of cases, worked pretty well.

Other cases, it was kind of awkward, but to the extent that you can merge those two, so that for instance, every new blog post is a discussion starter in the community, that can really help with both sides of things. You've got the high-quality content that you've written or your experts have written going out there, but also. It serves as a way of keeping the community active. I mean, that's a fun little approach, although sometimes, the concept is easier to think about than actually execute, from a tactical standpoint.

Jono Bacon: Yeah, I mean, that's the thing. That's one of the reasons why... There's two thoughts here: One is in terms of, for example, succeeded in that specific piece, the content piece, I think again, it's about being intentional and saying, "Okay, well these are the types of content we think our audience cares about." You can determine that

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from looking at how well your previous content performs, right? For example, take a look in Google Analytics and see what are the most popular articles that people are tending to read and just observational things that you notice about what people like and then having material in your editorial plan around, "Okay, well, we're going to put more of that content out because people tend to respond very well to that."

But the other element to this, the broader, again, zoomed out piece is when building communities, it's not just about putting together a plan and executing that plan and observing the results, because that's how communities get better is you regularly review the results that you're measuring and then you play a bit of detective work and say, "Okay, well, we've noticed, for example, that the number of page views is going up on our community forum. We noticed that the number of registrations is going down. What does that mean?" Well, it means that people are reading the content as window shoppers, but there's not enough of a reason for them to sign up, for example. We can put some different things in place to do that.

There is kind of a broader element to this, which is building the skills internally in your organization. When I come in as a consultant to clients, they typically want me to help them to put together the community strategy. What they don't necessarily realize is that a big chunk of the success that I have is in helping them to build those skills internally so you don't depend on a consultant anymore.

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It's important, therefore, if you want to be successful in this world, to track the execution of your planning as well. That's one of the reasons why I said earlier on, "Put together an annual set of objectives. Put together a specific content plan on a regular basis, every two weeks or every four weeks." Then iterate, look at, "Okay, well, when we put together our last editorial calendar, it was a little bit difficult for us to identify the right kind of authors," or, "Our review process was too slow."

What you do is you tune it and you knock off the kinks in the armor regularly as you're going through and doing so. What that does is that essentially build that organizational efficiency. The thing is we need to be intentional in doing that. What often happens is companies start building communities and then they don't operate on that kind of cadence, so they don't intentionally have those questions and conversations around how do we make the process more efficient. That's how you build those internal skills.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, just to get back to your onboarding process, I think that something that is so critical that often people who have not been in the community world don't realize is how it's important to make the entire process as easy as possible because, especially for new users, the community is not necessarily delivering a ton of value. In other words, they aren't going to jump through hoops to join your community. They'll go do something else.

Jono Bacon: Exactly. Yeah, yeah.

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Roger Dooley: Making that process very simple of just registration simple, don't have them fill out a lengthy form, let them populate that later. The college community that I built, we eventually became part of a large corporation's resolve and acquisition. In another part of the business, they had a hack or something go on and they came up with a set of security restrictions that they were going to apply to the community, which were things like expiring passwords every 90 days and very difficult password requirements initially and periodic logouts.

We had to really push back and go all the way to the mat with them and say, "No, no. Hey, look, this might work for online banking, but this is a community where people don't have to participate and making it difficult is simply going to drop the traffic and participation and the benefit that people are deriving from it." We prevailed in that case, but I think anybody who's considering starting a new community really has to try and figure out how to make that onboarding and then just the continued use of the community as simple and frictionless as possible.

Jono Bacon: Yeah, I could not agree more with you, Roger. It's so fundamental. What I would recommend anyone to do here, and it's a little terrifying, but it's really illuminating, is when you put together your on-ramp for someone joining your community, let's say, for example, you want to have a discussion forum where you can post news about your products and your services and people can go and post questions and answer those questions within the community, a lot of communities set up like that, set up, create your onboarding process. Then watch somebody go through it, right? Have them go, for example, to the

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website where it talks about your community and why they should sign up and why they should participate. Then watch them go through and watch where they stumble. Often, it will be things that you would never, ever, possibly envisage that anyone would have a problem with.

Those are the things that you want to learn about that quickly because if you start going into the high-growth element and you're doing the content and the social media and the events and all of the outreach stuff, you want to make sure that people aren't hitting those snags because the majority of people, as you say, when the value proposition is still quite new and it's ill-defined in their heads, they won't give you the benefit of the doubt. They will just think, "Okay, this isn't working. I'll go and do something else." That could be lost revenue.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, and of course, that's pretty much the theme of my book, Friction, how in most cases, if you want people to take an action, you've got to get rid of as much friction as possible. That applies not just online communities, it applies to lead generation, online ordering, and everything else. Easy wins about 99% of the time. Occasionally, there are exceptions, but 99% of the time, make it easy.

Let me ask you something else, Jono: When you are either encouraging participation by established members who are already in that helpful mode, or new members, what do you think about things like leaderboards and gamification, badges for little milestones? "Wow, you've

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got to 25 posts. You unlocked the whatever badge and so on." Do these things work? What's your take on that?

Jono Bacon: Yeah, that's a fabulous question. I think, again, going back to the psychology of human beings, we are very incentivize-able creatures. It's one of the reasons why we collect airline miles and we collect trophies in video games and we collect our little stamps on coffee cards and salad shops and things like that. The correct usage of incentivization can really significantly help people progress through their community journey.

Without shilling my book too much, one of the things I walk through in the book is how people go through that on-ramp process and then they start out as casual participants and then regulars and then they become core members. The way in which you push people through that journey is, in many cases, through incentives. I would think the right kind of incentives and rewards are incredibly valuable, right? This can often be as simple as recognizing good contributions and it can be when people reach different milestones in their journey, giving them access to information to people, giving them rewards.

Where it gets tricky with gamification is, gamification, many people think of gamification as leaderboards and trophies and badges, which is where it's most typically applied, gamification is really powerful for onboarding. For example, when people play video games, most video game players will tend to collect the first 20 or 30 trophies and then they kind of get a little bit bored of collecting trophies and they move on and they do something else. Very few people collect them all. It's a similar thing here,

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that you can use gamification primarily for getting people up and running and getting them familiar with the community, but once you've built that habit, they don't really need to depend on the gamification quite so much.

The tricky thing and the most critical thing here is you want to incentivize the right behavioral patterns. For example, years ago, the majority of online discussion forums, you could set thresholds. You could, say, when someone's posted a hundred messages, they get this particular rank. When someone's posted 250 messages, they get another kind of rank next to their name. That actually generated a lot of really poor behavioral outcomes because a lot of people would respond with, "+1," or, "Yes," or, "I agree," just to get their number up, so you ended up getting poor-quality discussion.

It's important to measure not just activity but the validation of activity. To give you an example, in the open-source world where people build technology, when someone contributes a new bit of code to a project, you could measure the action, the submission of the code, but the code may be terrible. I like to track the submission, which gives us a sense of how many people are seeking to participate. Then once that code has been reviewed and it's been merged in to the project, that, to me, is the validation. It's important to make sure you track both.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. It's funny how I, too, was around the communities when all you had were those little text member levels where it'd be a novice or a regular member or a senior member. There's actually a psychological theory called the goal-gradient hypothesis

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that basically says is, and this works with rats, too, by the way, "As people get closer to a goal, they go faster." They've tested it with things like filling up your coffee card, those last few cups you consume more quickly and so on. You could definitely see that in posting behavior.

Or some of you posting normally, say there's a threshold of 300 to get to senior member, something like that, to 300 posts. People would post up, but they'd get about 275 and suddenly, the posts start getting a little bit shorter and shorter. Pretty soon, as you say, suddenly, they're down to "Great point," type posts, which is... Then, of course, the normal behavior resumed once they hit that threshold. It's easy to believe that more complex and sophisticated gamification programs can drive behavior is something simple as a little text word under somebody's name that did it.

Jono Bacon: Right. Well, the thing is as well as, just very briefly, is you mentioned leaderboards as well. You've got to be a bit careful in communities with gamification as well, because years ago, I put together a leaderboard for the Ubuntu Project and people who were on the leaderboard loved it, right? They loved being up there in the top 10, but a lot of people who weren't on the leaderboard felt quite dejected. You also want to make sure that it's not just the incentive for the individual, but how is that presented within the context of the community? Because it's a social system. You just got to be a little bit careful about that, too.

Roger Dooley: Right. Those leaderboards can be sticky as well. If it's sort of an absolute thing, like the number of helpful votes for the number of posts or something, as a new person trying

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to crack that leaderboard, it's going to be very difficult. I think displaying different things, perhaps some kind of monthly basis or weekly basis or something, lots of recognition gets spread around a little bit, the useful.

Jono Bacon: Right, exactly.

Roger Dooley: Let's see. I'm curious. I guess I want to hit one the one last topic here, but or I could go on for hours, I think, but neither one of us can afford to do that at the moment. Do you recommend building the community on your own website or property as opposed to, say, using Facebook groups? Two-part question. If so, what tools in 2020 do you recommend for building just, say, starter community, not something where a big open-source development project or something, but just to get that initial community going?

Jono Bacon: Yeah, I personally tend to bias my own thinking and my own recommendations towards people running their own infrastructure, so having your own forum, for example, as opposed to using something such as Facebook. There's a couple of reasons for this. One is: You get way better analytics when you run your own system. You can understand your audience much better. The analytics that you get in the social media platforms, they go from okay to pretty poor, frankly.

The other thing as well is: When you build a community on somebody else's platform, you're living in their world and they may get bought by a company and get shut down and it's just too risky. If you spent years building that momentum around your community, you want to

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make sure that an external event isn't going to go and take it away from you.

Roger Dooley: What, you don't trust Facebook not to change their practices and policies?

Jono Bacon: We could talk about that for hours. Also, I'm not suggesting that people are going to start living like doomsday preppers in their underground basement with their community. What I recommend is utilize these platforms as one piece of it. For example, I would recommend, practically, imagine one of your listeners wants to set up a community around their business. I would set up what I would refer to as a community clubhouse, like a forum.

I'm a huge fan of a platform called Discourse, which is completely open-source and free to use. There's lots of companies that provide hosting for it. It's very, very powerful and featureful. I would say something like Discourse, but then I would have a presence on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram. I would use those as a place to push out a lot of content and to engage with your audience there. Ultimately, you want to bring people into one place. I would recommend that would be your Discourse forum.

I would also recommend using, just if we're getting down into tools, tools such as CoSchedule, which is a social media editorial calendar, effectively, the way you can plan out your social media for a set time scale. Instead of just posting when you feel like it, you map out the next week so you've always got something going out there.

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I tend to orientate myself also to open-source platforms, not just because that's my background, I grew up in the open-source world, but also because it's open-source, it's generally always going to be free and available. If you, again, are using a paid service, there is a risk that they may adjust their pricing, they may shut down, the product may become poor. I tend to look at the long game in that regard as well. For example, if you're going to set up a blog for your community, I'm a huge fan of WordPress, but Drupal's great as well.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, great tips, all. Let me remind our listeners that today, we are speaking with Jono Bacon, author of the new book, *People Powered: How Communities Can Supercharge Your Business, Brand, and Team*. Jono, how can people find you?

Jono Bacon: Probably the best ways to go to my website, which is Jono Bacon, J-O-N-O, Bacon like the meat, dot com. All my social media information and background and history and information about the books is on there. Then *People Powered*, which just came out recently, is available on Amazon, Walmart, Target, all of the usual bookshops.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link to those places and to any other resources we spoke about on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast and we'll have a text version of our conversation there as well. Jono, thanks for being on the show. Fun talking communities. Hope we can do this again.

Jono Bacon: Absolutely. Thank you, Roger. It was a pleasure.

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Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is RogerDooley.com.

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

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