STEAL THESE TEMPLATES: Creating a Community Plan the Easy Way

HELLO

I am Stephanie Bayer

If you didn't know already, you're at GDC! Surprise! If you weren't at this talk, then maybe you'd be tweeting at me, @NSSteph, but probably not…

PLAN IT

So you have to make a plan?

First rule, DON'T PANIC!

Well, that's more of a guideline…

Actually, it's about asking all the right questions...

The 2 biggest aspects you need to focus on when creating your community plans are:

◇ Getting to know your community, what the heck they are doing, and what phase of the community funnel they are in.

◇ What are your studio/company/team goals? What success metrics matter to your team?

The

Breakdown

What stage is your community in?

ESTABLISHED

Established: Is your community already established, re: continuing IP or existing property?

INCEPTION

Are you establishing new IP and thus creating your community?

MATURE

Mature: Is your community already it's own ecosystem & you're just coming in to watch?

MITOSIS

Is your community basically just your small group of hardcore regulars who aren't interested in bringing in new blood?

I know what stage they are in!

…Now what?

THE PATTERN

Where is your community spending its time?

Who is your target audience?

Content, boss!

Keep an eye towards the future!

Inception Community Example

Where?
Our game is a mid-core mobile title. Currently, fans of mid-core mobile read: competitor game forums, are active on threads about mobile titles on Reddit/GAF, participate in comments on video game news sites.

Who?
Our game is meant for everyone of course! BUT, based on playtesting, it skews towards women, aged 18-25 and men, aged 28-32.

Content!
Think about what content performs best for this group. When it should be posted? Create your idea list so that it can be concepted & placed in a calendar!

Future!
We've noticed fans watch streams of popular competitor titles within the same genre; This may be where we should dedicate creating some unique content.

The

What are your success metrics?

Breakdown

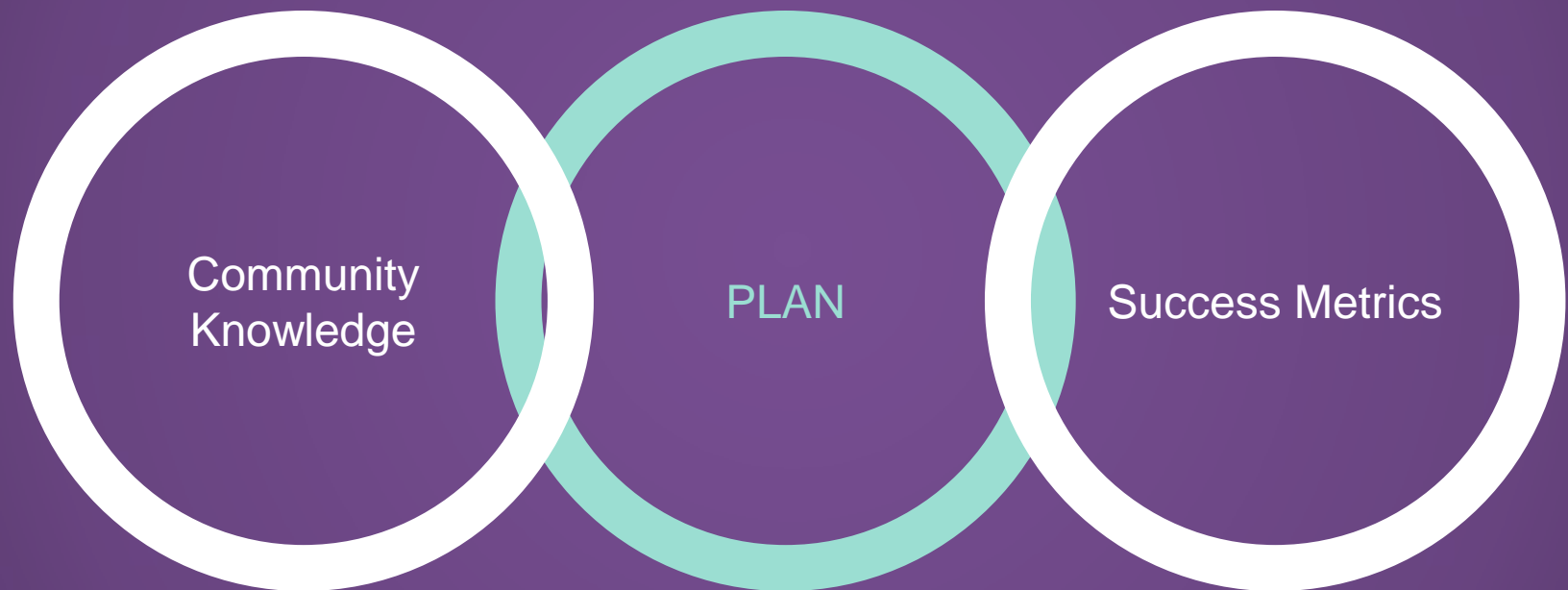◇What are your current numbers?

◇How much growth are you looking to achieve?

◇Are you more concerned with growing your specific channels or creating an overall positive brand experience? Perhaps a bit of both?

◇Will you have to achieve certain goals per quarter? Calendar year? Initiatives during launch timing that need to be hit?

Now that I have all this data…

What the f*#@ do I do with it now?

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇ ALWAYS SLIDE 1: Community Motto/Strategy/Vision Statement: List, quote, or short paragraph describing how your goals align with your current marketing/studio/or personal creed in terms of community.

◇ ALWAYS SLIDE 2: Current Channel metrics: SOTU of your current social outlook, should also include pertinent data about your forums, company site, as well as social channels.

◇Next slide(s): Break out that Community Knowledge data!

◇Next slide(s): Success Metrics: list of expected channel growth for the quarter, launch period, or year; Can also include specific data like proposed budgets, etc. Keep it short though, all overview.

◇Next slide(s): Proposed Plans – ideas: Big and small, how you're supporting the team, channel activations, and all that jazz.

◇Last slide: Schedule of events as you see them happening!

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇ ALWAYS SLIDE 1: Community Motto/Strategy/Vision Statement: List, quote, or short paragraph describing how your goals align with your current marketing/studio/or personal creed in terms of community.

Create tools, tutorials, challenges, and contest to help turn Gamers into students/modders, and modders into developers. Our tools aren't just for devs, they're for everyone!

Community Strategy Example

"*It's all about you!*" - Push the ideas of open world – it's up to you decide where to take it!

"*Inspire. Engage.*" – Create content that appeals to both the casual and the hardcore – making it a rich addition to the open world around them.

Support all PR/Marketing plans and messaging throughout the campaign.

Create unique community opportunities through video content, streaming, and advocacy.

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇ ALWAYS SLIDE 2: Current Channel metrics: SOTU of your current social outlook, should also include pertinent data about your forums, company site, as well as social channels.

Example for SOTU of "Our Game"

Facebook	Twitter	Game Forums	YouTube
Current Likes: xx	Current Followers: xx	Unique Visitors: xx	Current Subs: xx
Posts per day: xx	@'s per day: xx	Threads per day: xx	Avg. view per video: xx
Competitors': xx	Competitors': xx	New accounts created: xx	Avg. viewer age: xx

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇ Next slide(s): Break out that Community Knowledge data!

THIS IS YOUR
TIME

Get everyone speaking the same language

Talk about what works

More importantly, talk about what DOESN'T
work & offer a community sentiment
"thermometer."

Community Knowledge Example

Most of our fans reside on xx website; We should look for partner opportunities for contests with them.

According to Google Analytics, 54% of our fans are checking out our blog on mobile, which the experience isn't optimized. We should rethink our mobile experience and budget to optimize the site.

Our game targets these demographics and fans that age use xx channels; Therefore, we should focus our social efforts on xx channels with less support to xx channels.

We have a group of hardcore fans running tournaments every Tue; I think we should make them official mods & offer prizing before laugh updates
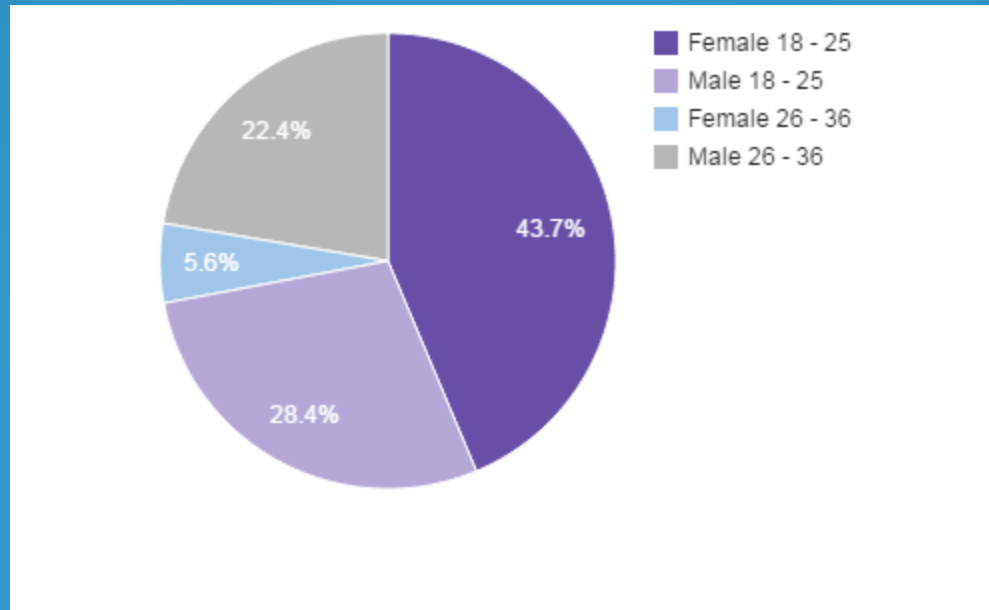
Demographic breakdown: Can be broken down in however your team see's your audience to be relevant;

Could be by age, fans of a particular IP, fans you hope to reach; This   is also a great time to describe the community dynamic to your team   who more than likely won't have the time to research the community   the way you will. Be the expert I KNOW you are!

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇Next slide(s): Success Metrics: list of expected channel growth for the quarter, launch period, or year; Can also include specific data like proposed budgets, etc. Keep it short though, all overview. This should also be where you mention things like reporting.

Success Metrics Example

Facebook	Twitter	Game Forums/Site	YouTube
Launch Goal Likes: xx	Launch Goal Followers: xx	Launch Goal Unique Visitors: xx	Launch Goal Subs: xx
Posts per day: xx	@'s per day: xx	Threads per day: xx	Avg. view per video: xx
Strategy to complete this:	Strategy to complete this:	Strategy to complete this:	Strategy to complete this:
$10K Facebook Ad spend	Republish marking content	Unique blog posts	Dev Diary every week
Republishing Marketing content	Personal interactions	Chat with the dev threads	Archive current livestreams-link via social to refresh content
Promotions	Targeted contests	Community highlight interview	In-depth character deep dives
Giveaways	Hashtag Hunts		

Community needs to have exclusive content to meet our goals.

* **You the boss!**

   Build anticipation for upcoming content by showcasing how to use the new in-game currency to purchase cool upgrades

* **Community Creations/Upload Gallery (July)**

   Utilize Twitter and Tumblr to share weekly gifs showcasing a new weapon each week until Launch.

* **Character Customization Options (August)**

   Weekly dev diary about the upcoming changes to character customization

* **"Cashing In" events (Facebook/Twitter)**

   Encourage fans to take pictures with fake money in order to be featured in our community album on Facebook/Flickr.

* **Community Exclusive Swag giveaways**

Success Metrics Example: Reporting

Set the standard for how reporting should be done and how often (weekly, bi-weekly, etc)

* Explain how your day is broken down

    Build out a graph to explain how much of your day is spent on strategy and content planning/writing, versus responding to fans via social.

* Devise your reporting system based on the KPIs important to your team

    Growth on Twitter is important? List what you did on Twitter that week (posts, replies, RT's) and provide that to show weekly growth.

* Create a template to use for reporting – MailChimp, Excel, Word, PDF
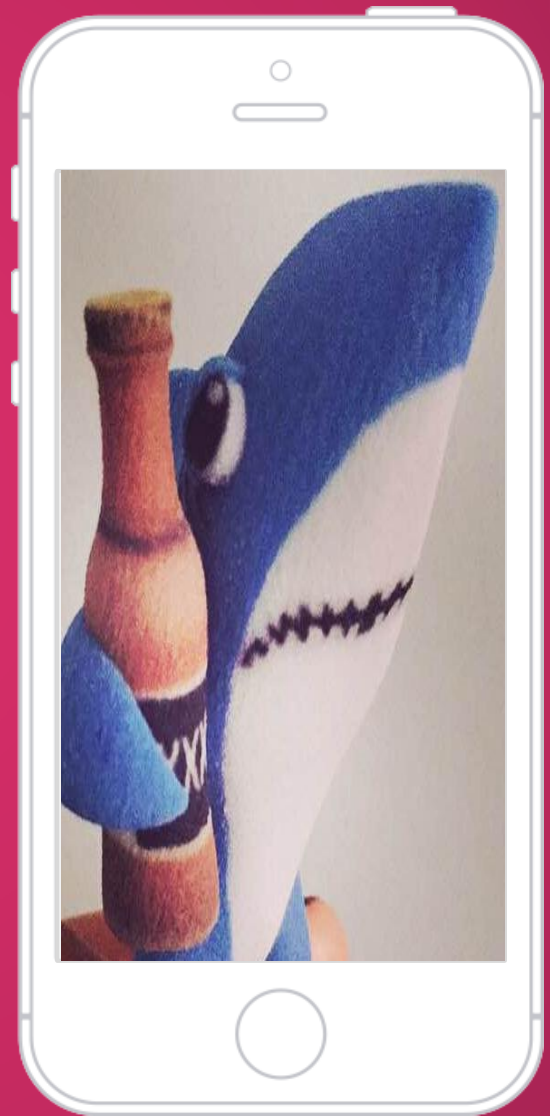
    Create one solid template that can be modified easily – that way content can be a bit more tailored to the audience; The entire studio might not care how many followers we gained in one week, but they might want to see the highlights of posts and interactions it received.

* Regular reporting keeps you honest

    If something isn't performing well, change it. If you see design posts do better than audio posts based on views per article, time to start buttering up the design team to help you make great content.

* Also the time to discuss whether you may need paid for social monitoring tools

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇Next slide(s): Proposed Plans – ideas: Big and small, how you're supporting the team, channel activations, and all that jazz.

Big Ideas Projects! How do I present them?

* It's okay to go pie in the sky, BUT be sure you have a good foundation in figuring out how to accomplish the goal without someone holding your hand.

* Try and share possible budget numbers along with the idea so it doesn't come as a shock if the team decides they do want to go for that idea.

* Always try to show accompanying data as to why this should be done: this idea came about because it is based on xx amount of player feedback, website visits, requests via survey, etc.

* Stop! Collaborate and tell your team this is what you should do! If you have connections and a cool collaboration the community would love is possible, it never hurts to ask!

TIME TO ORGANIZE

◇Last slide: Schedule of events as you see them happening!

Content Calendar Example:

	June 2016					
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 **E3 Day 1** -Post photos from the floor -Drive awareness of new content.	8 **E3 Day 2** - Day 1 wrap-up Post -Post -Drive awareness of new content.	9 **E3 Day 3** - Day 2 wrap-up Post -Post photos from the floor -Drive awareness of new content.	10 - Day 3 wrap-up Post -Drive awareness of new content.	11
12	13 Giveaway Day	14. E3 ICYMI	15 Blog post from Art team	16 Initiation Station Call-out for RFA.	17 Weekend Instagram Shoutout	18
19	20 New footage released – video YouTube	21 Post Preview of new level	22 Blog post from design	23 Hashtag contest	24 Weekend Instagram Shoutout	25
26	27 Developer Blog – Over-the-top / VIP Style.	28 Launch of new app	29 Blog Post from Audio	30 Giveaway Day		

Content Calendar Example: Launch Week In-Depth

Facebook	Twitter	Game Forums/Site	YouTube
We're almost there! Click here to pre-order	Almost there! Pre-order now [link] #ourgame	New Thread: Our Game Launch time	Launch trailer live
Post time: 9 AM PT	Post time: 9 AM PT	Post time: 9 AM PT	Post time: 9 AM PT

Things to remember in your planning and strategy sections:

You don't have to go it alone… There's always a production calendar, someone to ask, PR, Marketing, or a Director to work with.

Ask your boss what your budget is! If you have no boss, then be reasonable with your budgets and why the heck are you here in this summit!?

Ask a fellow Community Manager!

Try to go for the extra pieces of flair. Don't just do the minimum!

Whatchu mean 'Flair'?

FLAIR AKA BONUS ROUND

◇ Create a Content Beats slide in order to show how you've brought in everyone's schedule into account in your plan.

◇ Offer post launch or long term content ideas for at least a month after launch.

◇ Every time you set a goal or a major PR event happens around your game, send out a special studiowide/companywide email highlighting the top links, how many impressions your story received, top comments from fans, negative comments from fans (Sentiment is important!), or major follower/Like milestone. Your hard work deserves to be celebrated!

One last thing…

I promised you templates!

◇If you head to this URL [http://bit.ly/StephsAtGDC] there will be templates in a folder that represent the 4 main community types I mentioned along with this presentation to use as a guide.

THANKS

ANY QUESTIONS?

♥

You can find me at:
@NSSteph,
smbayer@gmail.com,
or drinking all your best bourbon.

CREDITS

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