



TOOL | INSIGHT COMMUNITIES

An insight community is a group of hundreds to thousands of your partners, stakeholders, and/or citizens – active or prospective – who share with you what they think and feel, and why they do what they do.

Using an online space, also known as a cloud-based customer intelligence platform, they allow you to engage in a two-way dialogue through forums, surveys, polls, blogs and other interactive tools. City of Edmonton, Surrey and Burlington are just a few of the cities using insight communities as part of their community engagement arsenal.

NOTES AND HIGHLIGHTS

The most successful insight communities can be powerful tools to gather community intelligence, as long as you put members' needs first.

- Conversation is a two-way street. Insight communities must be properly resourced to ensure someone is moderating and facilitating discussion on a regular basis. Members expect to see responses to their comments and questions within a relatively short period of time.
- Build long-term, meaningful relationships – facilitators and members get to know each other through on-going dialogue, which deepens their engagement and creates a context for higher quality feedback that leads to actionable insight.
- You must be willing to give up the structure and control you may have been used to using other methods to facilitate dialogue. While moderation is part of resourcing this tool, true insight is gathered from open conversation and transparency within the community.
- Fills in the gaps – insight communities fill in the gaps that surveys, Big Data and focus groups cannot accomplish on their own.

*Useful for seeking intelligence across a moderately large audience, **insight communities** work best when members feel empowered*

STRENGTHS

- Allows members to engage at their convenience in two-way dialogue
- Humanizes data – Provides quantitative and qualitative insight through community analytics, surveying and discussion
- Content can be modified quickly to reflect initiative's evolving needs

WEAKNESSES

- Requires well-managed moderation to keep conversations active and members engaged. Majority of community may often “lurk”
- Facilitators sacrifice some control – members may drive the discussion; confidentiality is low

WHEN TO USE

Insight communities are ideal for initiatives that are ongoing or longer-term where relationships can be fostered through on-going dialogue and interactions. Useful for seeking intelligence across a moderately large audience, insight communities work best when members feel empowered through open, transparent dialogue and see value in interacting with facilitators and other members of the community.