



# WHY RENT WHEN YOU CAN OWN?:



Exploring the Wide Range of  
Online Community Options

# Online community vs. panel



A **panel** is basically a very large **database** of potential participants for *any kind* of research engagement for any number of companies, contracted on an ad hoc basis.



An **online community** in market research is typically a group of custom-recruited individuals, *meeting specific criteria*, who agree to participate in ongoing research studies *for one company* over an extended period—weeks, months, years.

(An online community can be recruited from a panel.)



# Brands both large and small have been leveraging online communities for years



**“My Starbucks Idea”**

**“Google Opinion Rewards”**



**GOOGLE OPINION REWARDS**



**Microsoft**

**“Windows Insider Program”**

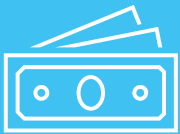
# Community Advantages



Targeted, profiled audience



Speed/agility



Cost-effectiveness\*

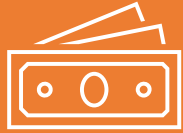


Response rates/engagement



Longitudinal studies

# Community Considerations and Watchouts



Cost-effectiveness



Bandwidth



Bias



Limited diversity



Fatigue

# Community Features



Branded vs. Unbranded



Gen Pop vs. Specialized



Audience



Methodologies

# Range of Community Options



You don't always need to go "full boat" for your online community.



# Large-scale community with platform



A large-scale community is a substantial investment but can also provide the most impact.

- ✓ Member engagement
- ✓ Incentive management
- ✓ Panel management
- ✓ More efficient data collection
- ✓ Aesthetic



- ✗ Cost
- ✗ Research/industry knowledge
- ✗ Learning curve

**\$200-500K+**



# Large-scale community with platform: Case study



## What

- Two separate communities – consumer (clients) and B2B (financial professionals)
- >1000 members each
- Branded

## How

- Platform + MR firm + dedicated internal staff
- Research/ member engagement w/platform
- Internal infrastructure with a queue for business partners
- Weekly, monthly schedule
- ~90% quant, 10% qual

## Impact

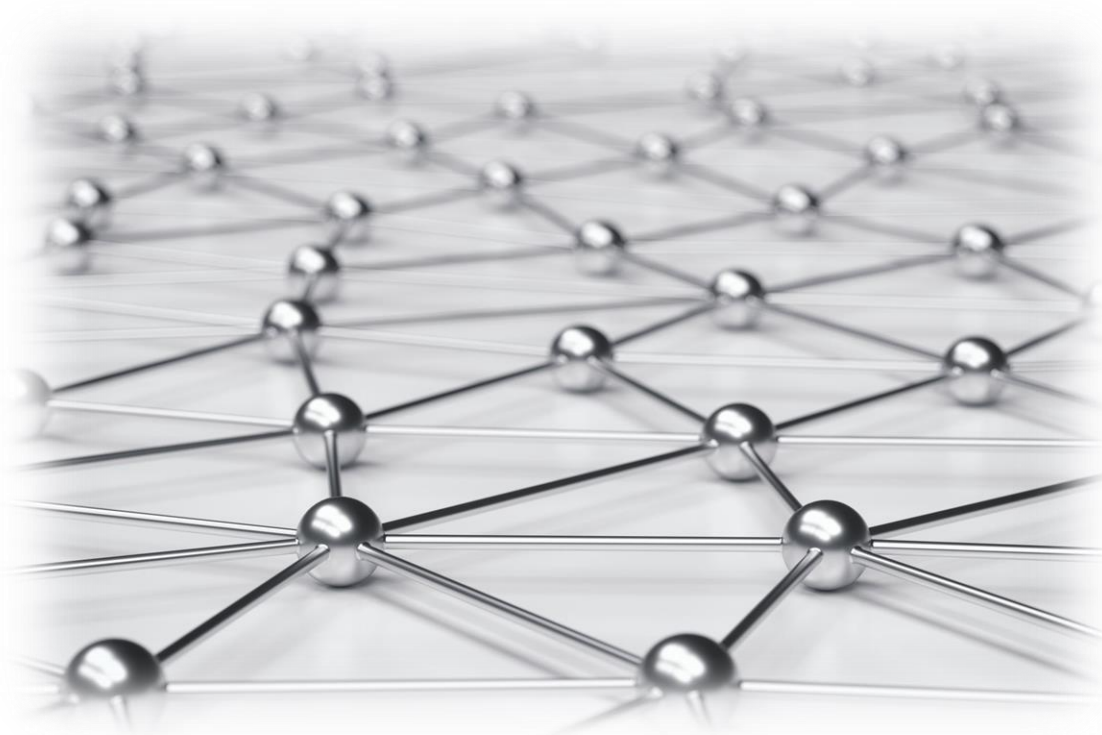
- Research engagement almost every week (~40 a year/ community)
- Average engagement cost: \$6-8K (year 2+)
- Response rates of 25%+ for B2B, 50%+ consumer

# Moderate quant community, no platform



You can maintain a quantitative community without using an online platform.

- ✓ Lower investment
- ✓ Allows for multiple methodologies
- ✓ Allows for high number of engagements



- ✗ Interface is less slick/engaging
- ✗ More manual processes
- ✗ Lower sense of community

**\$75-200K+**

# Moderate quant community, no platform: Case study



## What

- Consumer community of Medicare members
- ~1000 members
- Branded

## How

- MR firm executes research engagements through email invitation
- Manual engagement invites and incentive management
- Internal infrastructure with a queue for business partners
- 75% quant, 25% qual

## Impact

- Research engagement 1-2x a month
- Average engagement cost: \$9-12K (first year)
- Response rates of 50%+
- Manual engagement invites and incentive management

# Qual forum



A qualitative community/forum can be an excellent source of feedback year-round.

- ✓ Lower investment
- ✓ Can cover a broad range of topics
- ✓ Can get in-depth feedback
- ✓ High engagement/community



- ✗ Qualitative feedback only
- ✗ Lower number of engagements
- ✗ Small number of members providing a lot of input

**\$50-150K+**



## What

- Online forum of employers/HR
- 20 members
- Unbranded

## How

- Members recruited to participate in a 3-day bulletin board discussion every two months (6/yr)
- Client MR polls business partners on hot button issues – guide each session consists of 4-8 topics

## Impact

- Feedback on 30+ topics over the year (process, concept tests, journey, etc.)
- Average engagement cost: \$9-12K (first year)
- Response rates of 97%
- Manual engagement invites and incentive management

# Want to discuss further?



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