COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Phase III: Assessing and Evolving Community Engagement

Activity 20: Reassess Engagement Activities

Goals

1. ID engagement activities that need to evolve or be retired

2. Develop a plan for communicating evolution or retirement

3. Communicate decisions

Prerequisites

None

Who Should Participate?

Those focused on community engagement work. Best kicked off with a small group together (in person or virtually), and then moved to asynchronous work.

Length

30-60 minutes for Part 1

Background

How do you know when to sunset an initiative or evolve the initiative into a community directed initiative? You can't base engagement success on numbers alone. The emotional labor and interpersonal connections of community engagement can make it especially challenging to assess. It is important to step back and reassess, otherwise you can overtax your human and technical infrastructure.

Activity Instructions

Part 1: As a small group…

1. Discuss/brainstorm a list of activities or events that may be suitable for sunsetting. Plotting activities on an effort/impact matrix (sample below) may help identify elements that are difficult to maintain but do not provide a huge value to users.

2. If there are several, select 1-2 activities for further assessment.

3. Determine a timeline for the remainder of this activity, who will be responsible, and who will be accountable.

4. If a specific engagement activity is already under consideration for retirement, you may move directly to Part 2 of the activity.

Part 2: Asynchronously review data on each of the selected activities

1. Gather user data

    a. How many users will be affected by discontinuing the activity/event/what percentage of overall users participate?

    b. What are the numbers over time? Are the trends going up, did it start out strong, or peak several years ago?

    c. Did participants try it once or did they participate consistently?

    d. What percentage of users *do not* participate?

        i. Do you have qualitative or quantitative data on why they didn't participate? This may help you consider if the event/activity needs to evolve vs being stopped.
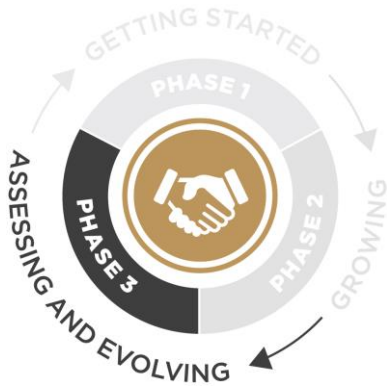
Activity 20: Reassess Engagement Activities

2. Gather data on alternative engagement opportunities

    a. What engagement goals was the activity or event supporting? What alternatives are there to support the engagement goal?

3. Gather data on organizational effort

    a. What human, financial, or technical resources does the activity or event require?

    b. Could the activity or event be managed by a community member or group?

    c. Is the activity or event adding to or distracting from our program mission?

4. Discuss and make a recommendation to retire/not retire/evolve activities or events based on the data and information gathered. If no clear consensus, conduct a sticker vote.

    - In a sticker vote, each participant is assigned a number of stickers - these can be physical stickers in an in-person event or a specified piece of text (e.g., +1) in a virtual environment. Participants place their stickers or text alongside the options they're voting for, according to the parameters of the exercise (e.g., most important, most likely, most interesting, etc.).

If, after the above elements are complete, the decision is made to retire an activity or event, move on to:

5. Gain approvals from the appropriate governance/leadership representatives.

6. If necessary, develop a retirement communication plan

    a. See Tech Activity: Developing an End-of-Life Communications Plan

7. Communicate changes to stakeholders

    a. Internal

        i. Ensure all program team members are aware of the change and the key details - why, when, alternatives

        ii. Update documentation (website, calendars, etc.) to ensure that the activity or event is no longer being advertised or promoted.

    b. External

        iii. If necessary, reach out to affected users with a simple, concise message - enough detail so that nothing is unclear, dates and times the activity or event will be discontinued, and recommendations for alternatives.

        iv. Reach out via different channels: emails, in-application messaging if available, phone calls, social media.

        v. Monitor feedback in the days/weeks following the announcement.