Case Study - Fandom

Democratizing Data for Company-Wide Success

Introduction: Roll for Initiative!

In a world... where pop culture reigns supreme and fictional universes are larger than life, fans look for a hero. Never fear, Fandom is here to save the day! Fandom is an online company behind D&D Beyond, Honest Trailers, and Fandom Wikis. They have over 1 million people who have edited wiki pages. In total, Fandom has 30 million content pages across 250,000 wikis. If you've used Wookieepedia to, say, cross-reference issues of *Star Wars* comics with Marvel Epic Collections, you've used Fandom. Everyone is a fan of something, and chances are it has a Fandom wiki.

The Problem

Pop culture and fan interest moves at lightspeed! Leadership needs to be able to make quick decisions, so having a real-time, scalable, and well-groomed audience from which to garner insights that impact the bottom line is key. To address this demand, Fandom needed a community platform to house their consumer panel, and a way to provide visibility of insights throughout the company.

The Solution

Enter: The Fan Lab. The Fan Lab is a private online community made up of Fandom, Fanatical, Screen Junkies, Gamepedia, Futhead, and Muthead users. Its purpose is to help the Customer Insights team at Fandom learn more about their users. Within the community, participants discuss opinions on Fandom properties, movies, TV shows, games, and more. These discussions help Fandom's Customer Insights team draw insights and conclusions about which games are popular, pros and cons of each, and user satisfaction. In exchange for participation, community members are rewarded with gift cards and sweepstakes entries.

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"Our fans are very excited to participate because they're really talking about the things that matter to them. It's great to understand how we can better deliver information to them that they can use to feel engaged with the properties and with the fan community."

Aaron Tell

Let's look at a real example from the Fan Lab. Recently, Fan Lab members discussed an upcoming Marvel Cinematic Universe movie and a new *Star Trek* TV show. The feedback taken from these discussions can now be used to shape future initiatives for each of Fandom's properties and provide unique insights to valued partners.

Assembling the Community

So, how did Fandom build out a community of willing participants? Luckily, Fandom already has passionate volunteers who regularly edit and moderate numerous wikis. So, Fandom partnered with Fuel Cycle to leverage this ready-made group to join the Fan Lab. There are several thousand members. Fandom also built on this existing group of participants using a variety of different techniques such as:

- Email newsletters to marketing list subscribers
- Dedicated invitations over email
- Social media promotion
- Onsite invitations

Fandom uses two screener surveys to make sure that community members are legitimate and will represent the site well. Screeners ask questions about favorite fandoms, favorite media formats, favorite streaming services, and Game Master status.

The Results: Gaining XP to Level Up

Since the start of the community, Fandom has run numerous activities that impact their bottom line. A few examples are:

- Internal Research: Validates initiatives internally
- Use for Offline Events: Tap into the Community
- Ad Testing and Benchmarking: Halo Partnerships

There are a few best practices that Fandom has garnered from the data collected in the Fan Lab. Best practices are launching a scalable community & getting actionable insights to your stakeholders: recruiting the right people, at the right time, in the right way. Another best practice that Fandom found is to use creative resources & teams that already exist to enhance insights, and the democratization of data across the entire organization.

Fan Lab Activities

- Polls
- Quizzes
- Semi-weekly discussion posts
- Surveys
- User interviews
- Video focus groups
- Managed ad partnerships and ad testing

The Fuel Cycle Difference

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