

Case study SNS

How to improve service, products and brand advocacy with an online community



About SNS

At SNS, the customers determine how, where and when they take care of their financial affairs. Online, over the telephone, with a financial advisor at home or in an SNS branch. SNS stands for simplicity in finance. As accessible as possible, so that customers know where they stand financially.

As a medium-size retail bank with ambitious growth plans, SNS has a vision to become the best 'self-service bank' in the Netherlands. Using an innovative omnichannel strategy, the bank has put the Web at the heart of the customer relationship and combined it with a network of lean banking branches and advisors who sell complex financial products.

In today's highly competitive market environment with an increasing amount of distribution channels and decreasing customer loyalty, it is critical to distinguish your brand. With the rise of technology, banks have to

redefine their relationship with their customers who are constantly online and they need to be prepared to offer services and support via these emerging digital channels.

Consumers today increasingly rely on recommendations from friends or buyers, like themselves, before making purchase decisions. These discussions can take place on multiple channels such as social media sites, external forums and review sites. Banks have to be actively involved in these conversations to gather insights and connect with their customers more intimately - preferably by steering these conversations to their own channel.

“Customers are increasingly using social media to share, connect and learn more about brands and their offerings. Banks have a great opportunity to use this channel for gathering insights, demonstrating transparency, engaging customers and developing new products. Leading organizations are already going beyond using social media to merely gather insights; they are making it part of an integrated customer experience strategy across channels.”

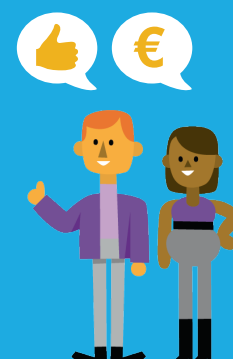
accenture

Business challenge

In 2010, SNS identified a challenge:

“How do we simultaneously gather customer insights, demonstrate transparency, develop new products and engage with our customers in a meaningful way?”

After careful consideration, SNS decided to start a customer community on its own website and internet banking environment. The community provides customers with a social space to share opinions, ideas and knowledge, and enables the bank to provide access to relevant, trusted information at every stage in the buying cycle around the topics its customers care about.



SNS Community

The SNS community focuses on promoting co-creation with customers, answering questions, and providing a platform for discussion and exchange of news. Members are also actively approached and asked to give their opinions of new initiatives.

At the SNS community, customers can discuss financial questions or ask for help when they are taking care of their financial affairs. They can learn from SNS employees and other customers and give feedback about SNS products and services.

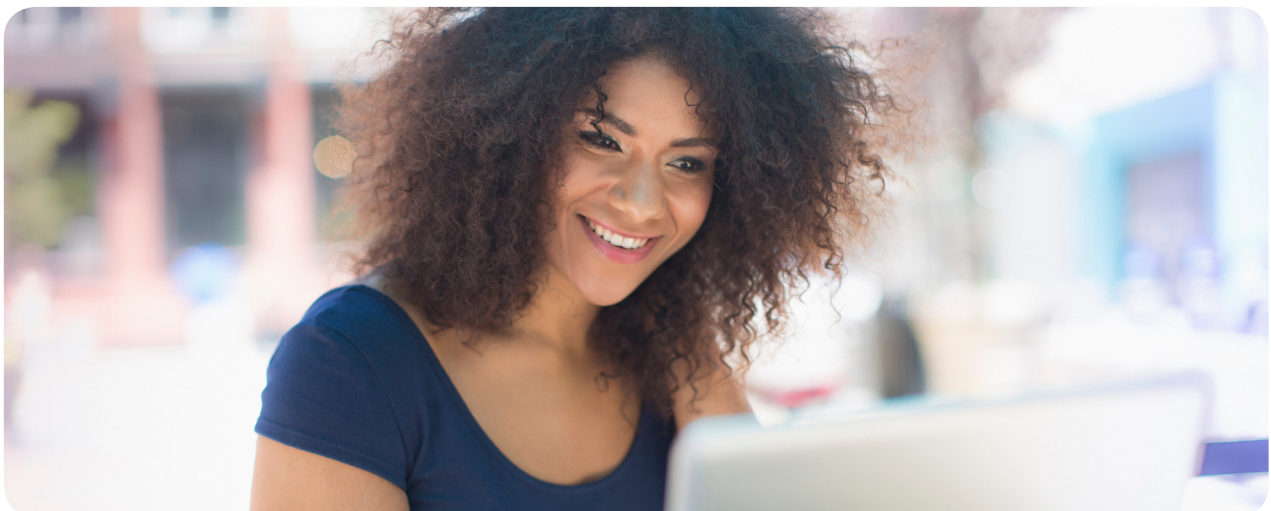
For SNS it is vital to give their customers all the tools and knowledge to create a 'financially healthy status'. The community can help their customers to achieve this goal. It also generates substantial cost savings for SNS, as one out of four questions are answered by customers.

By integrating the community into its corporate website, the bank took discussions on its brand under its own

control. Traffic to the community was increased by offering smart banking tips and product information, and it quickly became an important way for SNS to gather insights, demonstrate transparency, and develop new products with customers. This approach resulted in a better relationship with customers, alleviating frustration, increasing peer-to-peer recommendations and influencing customer satisfaction levels.

In 2013, the SNS community was opened to all customers wishing to think about or discuss SNS services and current financial issues. The number of participants rose from more than 1,000 at the end of 2012 to over 12,500 by the end of 2014.

'As social technology-based customer communities will become a standard - and strategic - component of virtually all customer engagement and marketing programs, we predict that by 2017, 80% of Fortune 500 will have an active customer community.'



Objectives



Realize call deflection



Improve SEO



Increase PR value



Create awareness among employees about customer needs



Boost loyalty among customers



Create financial awareness among customers



Improve products and services based on customer feedback

‘The experiences, creative ideas and dedication of our customers are helping us to improve and sharpen our plans and make us realize who we are doing that for.



Ton Timmerman

Director Customer Relationship Management & Commercial Support

Facts & figures



360,000

visitors per year of which 83% are looking for information



13,200

members



28,000

comments in 2,400 topics



25%

customer-helps-customer



8.2

rating of SNS by customers



€500K

call deflection per year

Results

The community has proven itself as an effective means for SNS to stay in touch with their most valuable customers, build loyalty, and realize considerable cost savings.

Improved loyalty and customer value

SNS has divided its clients into different segments, based on their customer value. Research clearly shows that high-value customers are better represented in the community.

Reduced service costs

As customers can find the answers to their questions in the community without having to contact customer services, the community results in a call deflection of €500K each year. In 2014, over 100,000 customers found an answer to their question in the community and 55,000 of them would have called if they hadn't been able to find the answer in the community. The community represents a social knowledge base, in which one out of four questions is answered by other community members instead of SNS employees.

The community also represents a PR value of about €25K, as more than 22% of community traffic comes from organic search (resulting from search engine optimizations in the community).

These savings surpass the investment in the community, including implementation costs, support, maintenance, and costs for community management and moderation.

Improved website, products and services

The My SNS customer portal at snsbank.nl provides customers with various tools to help them gain a good understanding and awareness of their financial affairs, including a cash book, savings targets, interest rates change messages, automatic replenishment for negative balances, and a savings manager.

Numerous improvements have been made thanks to the SNS community. A good example is the mortgages page which has been entirely changed. The customer's requirement is now the central feature instead of the product. Customers can also calculate how much of their own money they need for a purchase, and they can check to see whether their current mortgage could lead to future financial problems. Other examples include the My SNS personal banking environment and the SNS mobile app. In total, over 50 researches have been performed via the community.

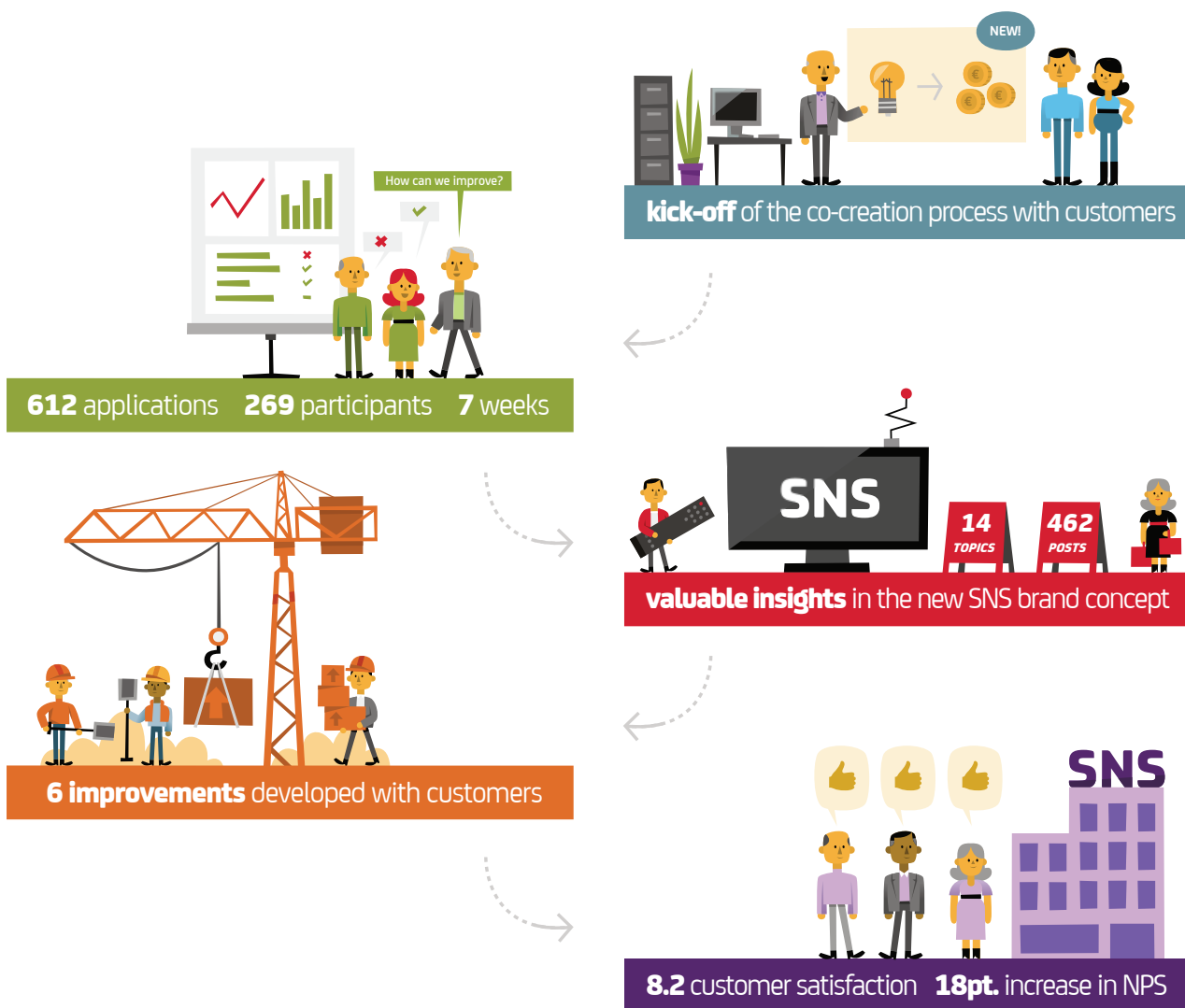


Case: Normal Banking

During a seven week co-creation period, SNS asked selected customers in a hidden co-creation sub forum about their ideas on 'normal banking', the theme of an upcoming marketing campaign.

Community members could share their ideas on different factors that define 'normal banking' and reflect these ideas on the products and services of SNS. In this forum SNS could pre-test their ideas for the campaign

and adjust it before it was officially launched. inSided partner Branddoctors Dialogue guided SNS through the implementation and execution of the surveys (from timeline and structure to analysis).



“We break banking habits.

We realize that we must listen to society and our customers. We will take the findings from the research and from conversations with our customers into account when determining our new strategy. 'Normal banking' is something we define in collaboration with our customers.

SNS wants to show that banking can be different: human and normal. We will focus on our core activities: simple and comprehensible payment methods, savings and mortgage products. With a clear advantage to our customers.

Dick Okhuijsen, COO & Board Member





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‘The SNS community gives us a unique chance to start real in depth conversations with our customers. We receive great feedback and suggestions from our community members that make it possible to create better products and services. The community is therefore a valuable asset for many employees.

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Wanda Catsman

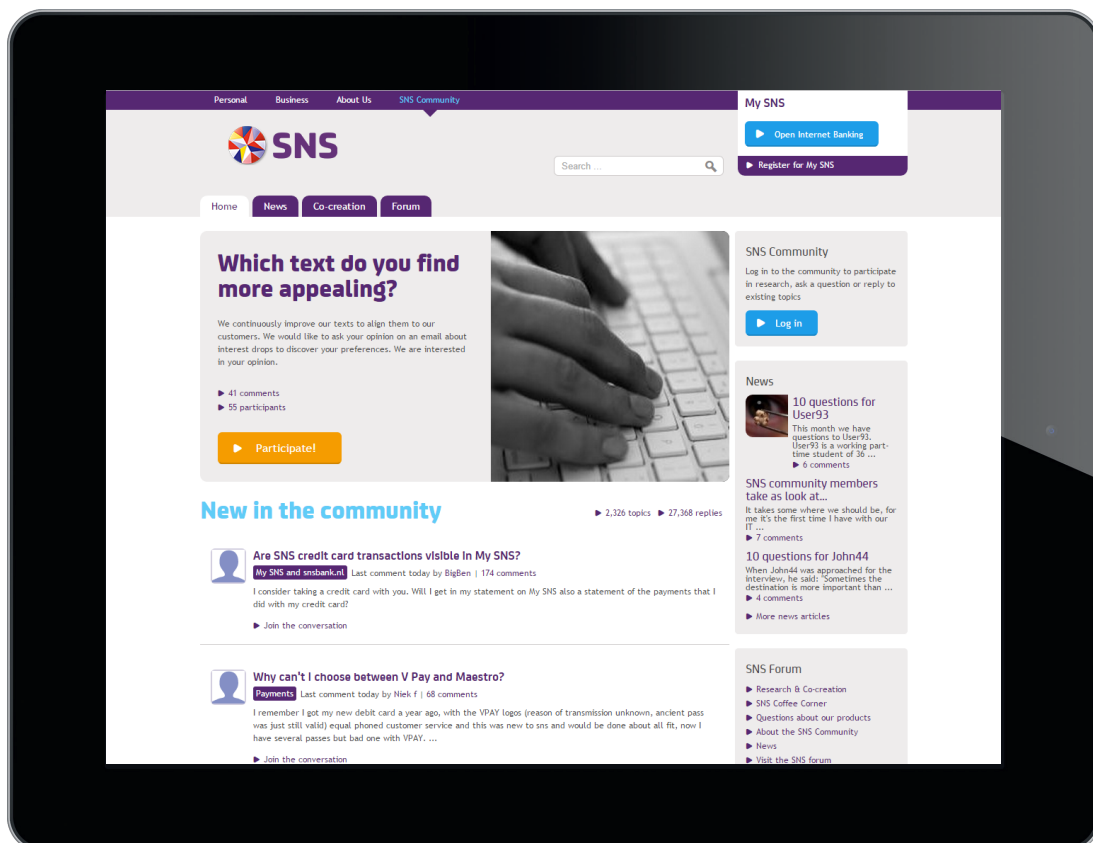
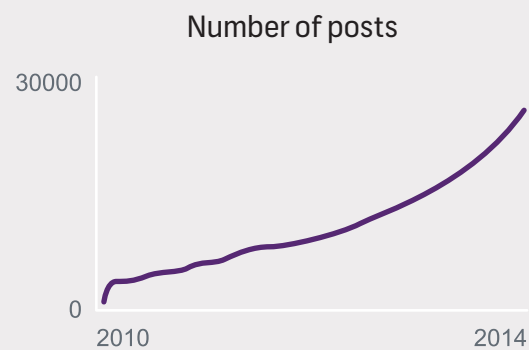
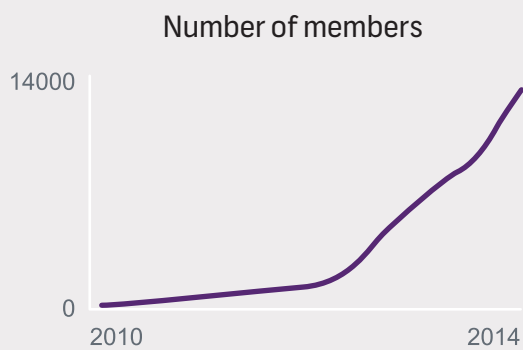
Community Manager

Forum

As one of the main components of the community, the forum offers customers the opportunity to ask questions, help each other, discuss current financial news, resolve issues and give feedback.

The forum has a clear structure, based on the different banking products and services SNS offers. Visitors can easily see what content is new on the community overview page. In a separate sub forum, customers can

start off-topic conversations and to get to know each other. Each month, over 30,000 visitors find answers to their questions, discuss financial topics, offer feedback and help others by posting over 1,000 comments.



Blog

The SNS blog is another main component of the community, offering members the opportunity to ask questions and leave comments on relevant topics. With its blog, SNS keeps its community members informed with a wide variety of content, including:



News about products, services and special events



Blogs from experts



Results of co-creation with community members



Interviews (with community members)



News about current events in the financial industry



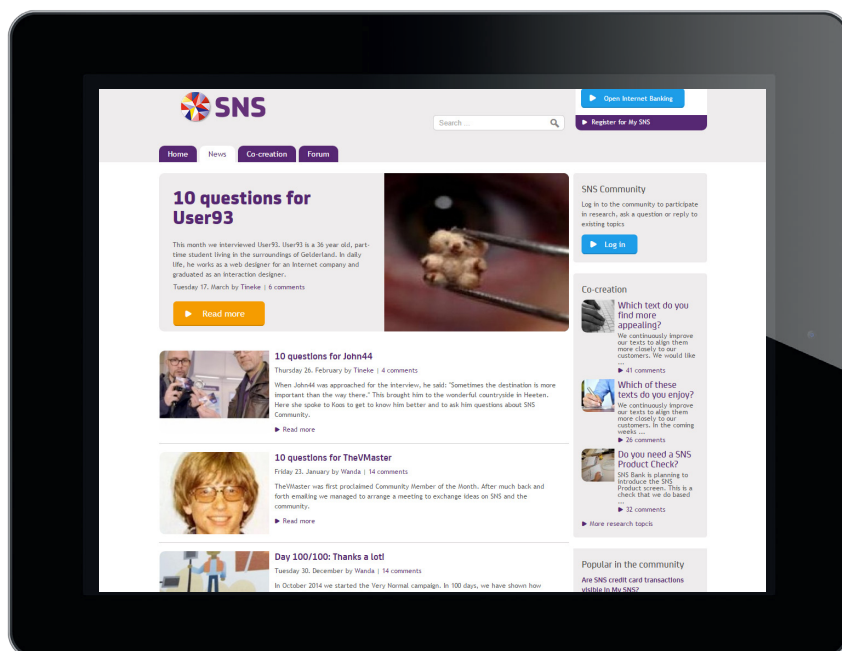
Financial tips and tricks

Interactive PR & SEO benefits

SNS uses its blog to create interactive PR. Different authors from SNS are able to create blog posts which can contain images, videos, polls and discussions (which can be moderated by the bank). SNS has published over 200 posts so far. Via the blog, customers can easily be redirected to other pages on the SNS website. The effect of blog traffic increasing the traffic to the regular website has been furthermore increased by several search engine optimizations in the platform.

Customer loyalty

The biggest motivation for community members to participate and play an active role in the community is being driven by their interest in other community members and desire to keep in touch with them. By creating interviews with community members, participation is furthermore stimulated. When a community interview is posted, other members clearly show a positive attitude towards by commenting and asking extra questions to the interviewed users.



Integrations

SNS initially launched a small scale members-only community including a forum and blog in order to offer service and gather feedback from their customers. After switching to inSided in December 2011, SNS added a co-creation module, website integrations and connected the community to their customer data warehouse.

Website

The website of SNS contains a page with more information about the community and a video in which the community manager tells more about the purpose of the community and explains its value for SNS and its customers.

Various website integrations provide visibility to the community and its content, inviting visitors to join the community and interact with other customers and employees. For example, widgets show recent and active forum topics in various website locations. And on every website page, the community is mentioned as one of the customer contact channels for service & contact.

In the community itself, user profile pages allow members to see new private messages, view new comments in topics they follow or created, update their profile, and directly visit main areas of the community.



Customer portal

In 2013, the community was directly connected to the My SNS personal banking environment, so that customers can immediately see which topics are being discussed in the community and are able to access the community with their customer accounts. This integration was made by means of a Single Sign On (SSO) functionality. By connecting to the data warehouse of SNS, the SSO functionality also provided moderators with direct access to the account details and contact history of community members and created the possibility to target customers with relevant community content.

Search engines

Initially, the community could be visited exclusively by SNS customers and its content wasn't indexed in Google. This changed in August 2013, when SNS decided to open the community to everyone and have its content indexed by search engines. Still, only SNS customers can join the discussions and interact with employees and other customers.

Organization

The SNS community is solidly embedded and widely supported within the organization. It has become a vital part of the SNS new customer engagement strategy, which also involves a customer council, webcare via social media and a social listening program (part of the Normal Banking campaign).



Marc van den Boom (Social Media Manager) is responsible for the community and its embedding within the SNS organization.



Wanda Catsman (Community Manager) is responsible for the daily management of the community and makes sure it stays healthy by creating content, attracting new members and activating current members.

Moderation

The moderation is done by **Tineke, Olaf, Tibor, Othman, Dennis, Joyce** and **Kirsty**, who have a customer focused approach and a wealth of knowledge about financial products and services and ensure a pleasant and open atmosphere for the community members.

Moderators play various roles, including answering questions and keeping track of the overall mood on the

forum (for example by intervening if members violate community guidelines). The clear structure of the forum is maintained by moving topics to the correct sub forum and editing topic titles as needed to make sure they are easy to find. The moderators also act as hosts/ dialogue facilitators: they welcome new members, express their appreciation for active users, create interesting content and identify customer feedback to pass on to the right department within SNS.



Rewarding super users

To nurture the engaged users who sustain and grow customer communities, companies can use gamification to identify, reward and analyze the user behaviors that bring value to community members and encourage them to return. The strategic use of game, reputation, and social mechanics inspires contribution, sharing, and content advocacy; boosting engagement and creating more customer advocates.

Some of the SNS community members are granted the title 'Community Experts' because of the expertise they showed by their participation in the community and the way they helped other people. They are rewarded with their own sub forum, where they can talk in private with other experts, the community manager and the moderators. They are also granted offline rewards. For example, SNS invites them on a regular basis to visit the office, meet employees and provides tours to special

departments like the IT department. On a monthly basis the community members can send in nominations for the 'Community Member of the Month'. This member receives special attention in the community newsletter that is sent to all community members each month.

Facilitating real conversations

SNS notices a difference in the tone of voice that is present in the comments on the community and those on other social channels like Facebook and Twitter. This difference became extra visible when the Dutch government announced that SNS REAAL (which SNS was part of) had to be nationalized because it found itself in acute distress due to its real estate problems. There was a lot of negative sentiment on Facebook and Twitter, while on the forum people started keen and knowledgeable conversations about the topic and were able to see the distinction between SNS REAAL and SNS.

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Whatever you ask, you always get an answer. And usually quite quickly, too. From SNS employees or fellow customers. The discussion can get quite heated at times. As a customer, you run into banking issues that don't always make sense. Then we help figure out how to improve things.



BigBen

Member since Sept. 2010

2902 comments

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‘As social media manager of SNS I am 100% satisfied with the cooperation with inSided. At both the strategic and the operational level, they are a strong partner to work with. I also appreciate their ever-critical attitude that goes along with a pleasant informal interaction.

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Marc van den Boom

Social Media Manager

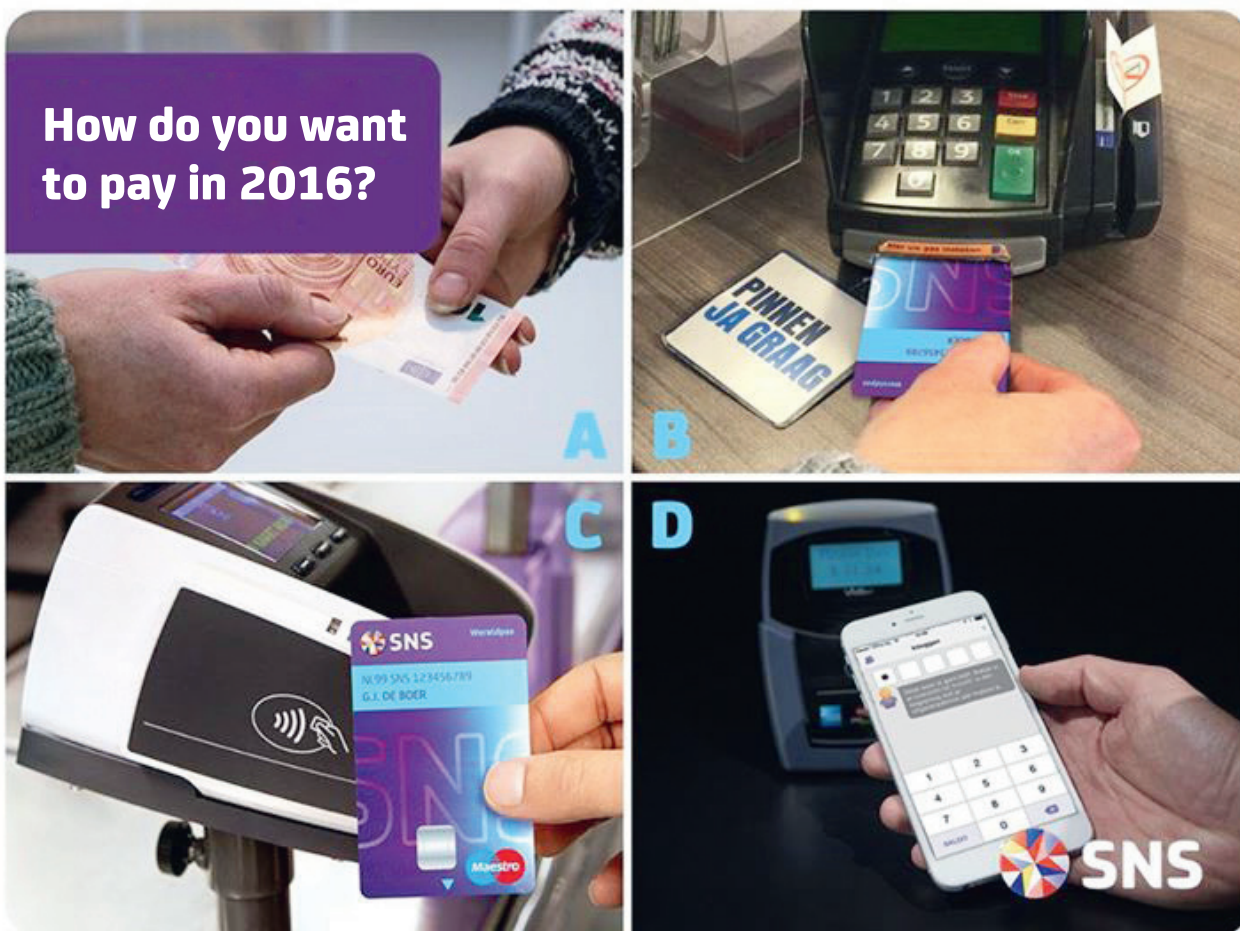
Co-creation at SNS

Co-creation isn't a new way of thinking. But the ability for brands and organizations to extensively involve people from around the world in design and development has only been possible since the arrival of the internet.

SNS realized that co-creation represents an easy, cost-efficient and effective opportunity for the bank to engage with its customers to improve its products, services and communication.

Specialized sub forums in the SNS community for example offer customers the possibility to help the

bank with creating new or improving current products and services. Example co-creation projects include the redesign of a mobile banking app, adjustments in the My SNS online customer portal, the introduction of a service card, and corporate communication enhancements. The main campaign and advertising initiatives of SNS are also based on the input of customers.



Why co-creation works

Co-creation provides an easy, real-time and cost effective way to engage customers for feedback and input using research, crowdsourcing, social innovation, real-time testing and discussion – helping companies to build better products and optimize communication and services.

Co-creation is about people working together to generate, cultivate and deliver new ideas, products, services, campaigns etc. that they themselves will benefit from. It provides significant benefits such as increased speed to market, increased product quality, new products and services, an increased competitive advantage and a larger market share.

Characteristics of co-creation are dialogue, 'common ground', enthusiasm, vigor, focus on results, and most importantly, putting customers at the heart of your business. Co-creation expands the role of consumers, transforming them from respondents into fully engaged participants in the research process, with better, more actionable results.

It turns market research, R&D and design into a dynamic, natural process involving a wider range of stakeholders. Firms that manage this process effectively will accelerate innovation, improve product quality, reduce risk, and increase market acceptance of new products and ultimately achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

Co-creation isn't a new way of thinking. But the ability for brands and organizations to extensively involve people from around the world in design and development has only been possible since the arrival of the internet. With advances in technology and a more participative, increasingly social consumer, engaging customers for feedback and input has never been easier, less expensive, or more effective.

Co-creation use cases



7 requirements for successful co-creation communities

Clear objectives

It is important to have clearly defined objectives from the start. Objectives may include:

- ✓ Improving products and procedures
- ✓ Developing concepts and propositions
- ✓ Increasing customer loyalty
- ✓ Validating campaigns and communication

Make sure all stakeholders as well as members are aware of these objectives.

The right people

In order to invite the right group of people, you may want to engage a profiler. Two criteria crucial to success are:

- ✓ Engagement: prepared and interested to participate in brand innovation.
- ✓ Positive feedback: apt at participating and co-creating.

A suitable platform

Select a platform that is suited to co-creation with your target group. Criteria for successful co-creation communities include:

- ✓ User friendliness
- ✓ Availability of various research tools
- ✓ News blog for announcements and feedback
- ✓ Room for initiatives by forum members
- ✓ Members are only presented with content that is relevant to them

Activation & involvement

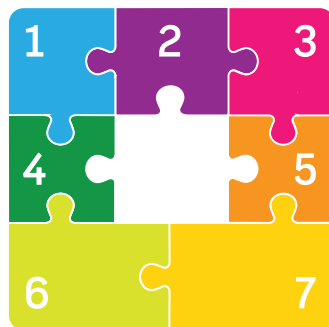
The community manager has the central task of keeping the participants involved throughout the community life cycle by:

- ✓ Incorporating this in the process and objectives
- ✓ Offering relevant content
- ✓ Sending out a weekly newsletter
- ✓ Recording video messages
- ✓ Providing feedback along the way
- ✓ Setting up offline campaigns

A variety of tasks

In order to maintain the attractiveness of participation, the community manager needs to provide a variety of topics, including:

- ✓ Voting in polls
- ✓ Generative techniques
- ✓ Response-ordering tasks
- ✓ Special assignments such as mystery shopping and photo tasks
- ✓ Alternating between structural and ad-hoc topics



Rewards

Members take part because of their intrinsic motivation. The community manager can provide extra rewards, including:

- ✓ Feedback on the outcomes
- ✓ Highlighting individual participants
- ✓ Offline events
- ✓ Incentives

Focus on results

Communities may have multiple objectives such as increasing customer loyalty or involving stakeholders, but the focus should be on realizing tangible results. Participants want to see actual improvements to products & services and want to be kept up-to-date in exchange for their efforts. Naturally, every brand will want the same. So involve your customers in tangible improvements, adjustments and development. Clear outcomes will keep your community going!

2 to 3 x

Add 2 to 3 topics per week. These topics should comprise a maximum of three questions. This will keep the required time manageable for participants.

30x

Thirty comments is sufficient for reliably distilling the general sentiment from a thread. To reach this number in every topic, you will need 100-125 active participants.

2 tot ∞

Depending on the objectives, the community can continue for a minimum of 2 months to indefinitely.

15-20%

Participants' NPS on your products will increase by 15 to 20% on average.

inSided Community Platform

The cloud-based inSided platform delivers an enterprise-grade solution to build, integrate and manage branded customer communities across digital touch points and devices.

On community pages, customers engage with each other and your company, get an overview of all relevant information and can browse new or popular topics related to your brand and products. Content can furthermore be embedded on your website, on your support pages and in your product using plug and play widgets that provide your customers with relevant information when and where they need it.



Q&A forums

Give your customers a place to ask questions, get relevant answers, and engage with each other and your company



Ideas & surveys

Improve products with research and feedback (surveys, ideas, news, tips & sweepstake submissions)



KB / FAQ content

Build a knowledge base as you go, and serve out the most relevant content using machine learning and AI

True SaaS



Content Intelligence



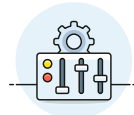
Gamification



Moderation



Analytics



API



SSO & social authentication



CRM integration

Technology is just one click away. Success is not.

Success is much more than just the right technology. As your dedicated partner, it is a mindset for us. Success is about a great kick off, continuous growth, focus on ROI and creating a world class team with thorough experience. Use our proven approach to ensure you get all essential knowledge and support, in every step of the way.



We help you to start and show success within 6 to 12 weeks



We help you to grow your platform and continue to deliver value



We help you set ambitious yet achievable goals and show ROI



We help you to build and train your team, and learn from peers

Drive real, measurable impact

The inSided platform will help you improve user engagement and increase product adoption. It enables an efficient CSM and support organization while keeping service levels high, and improves retention. Our customers typically see 15-25% reduction of support costs, 10-15% higher NPS scores & customer advocacy, and 8% reduction in churn.

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