

The Top 12 Community Apps in 2023 [Pricing + Reviews]

Making money from your followers isn't just about social media platforms anymore - community is the [new "followers."](#)

Users are [2.7 times more](#) likely to stay in an app for a sense of belonging, which presents online business owners and creators with an opportunity to build thriving, engaging communities and directly monetize their audience.

With so many community app platforms to choose from, things can get overwhelming. The good news is that we've simplified your decision-making process by highlighting the top community apps, the pros and cons for each, and we've outlined best practices for running a successful community app.

Before we dive in, let's define what a community app is!

What is a community app?

A community app or online community platform serves as a digital meeting place where individuals with similar interests [gather virtually](#). It provides a platform where like-minded people can connect, collaborate, and engage in discussions related to their shared professional or personal interests.

Community apps offer a range of features, such as group forums, direct messaging, and live streaming, which enables online business owners to establish [deeper relationships with their audience](#). Community apps serve as platforms where individuals—whether fitness enthusiasts seeking connections during their fitness journeys or knowledge entrepreneurs aiming to share valuable insights with professionals in their niche—can forge deeper connections with their fans and customers.

What are the benefits of having a community app?

[Sixty percent of businesses](#) currently have their own branded online communities, and an additional 15% of business owners are gearing up to launch their own within the next year. It goes without saying that having a [community app offers numerous advantages](#) for online business entrepreneurs, including:

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1. Increased brand loyalty

Online communities empower creators and online business owners to provide ongoing support and [engagement](#) to their audience. Features like [live Q&A sessions](#) and chats allow you to connect with your audience on a deeper level and collaborate with like-minded individuals. This not only creates [brand trust](#) but also boosts the likelihood of customers recommending your online community platforms to others.

2. Recurring income

When people discover an active community within a paid group, they tend to stick around longer, which means creators can count on a steady income through online community [subscriptions](#). Community apps also give creators a chance to earn extra bucks on top of subscriptions through [upselling and cross-selling](#).

3. Sense of ownership

Unlike social media platforms where [algorithms](#) can influence how your audience interacts with your content, community apps [give you direct ownership](#) of your audience. For instance, online community platforms grant online business owners direct access to valuable [customer data](#) like email addresses and demographics, which helps them craft tailored [marketing strategies](#) for customers.

The Top 12 Online Community Apps for 2023

Now, let's jump into the top online community platforms on the market and the pros and cons of each!

1. Kajabi

Kajabi is an all-in-one platform for online business owners, subject matter experts, influencers, and creators to monetize their content. With Kajabi, you can host your online business in the same place and create multiple digital products such as courses, communities, podcasts, membership sites, and coaching programs.

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The community app feature, [Kajabi Communities](#), includes essential features such as live calls, challenges, leaderboards, accountability tools, and real-time chat so creators can build a thriving community off of social media.

Communities 2.0 was released earlier this year after [acquiring Vibely](#), a leading community app. The platform offers a robust interactive online learning platform for customers such as quizzes, assessments, and YouTube live streaming to help you grow your business.

Because of the extensive list of products and features Kajabi offers, it removes the need for integration of other software solutions which saves you time and money as a busy creator.

Online business owners have the flexibility to offer coaching, distribute podcasts, and use [AI-powered tools](#) to create and launch courses all in one hub, making it easy for community members to engage with all of your content in one centralized platform.

Unlike other creator platforms, Kajabi [doesn't take a cut of creators' revenue](#) – the platform is entirely commission-free so you keep what your customers pay.

Monthly Price

- Growth: \$199/month
- Basic: \$149/month
- Pro: \$399/month

Annual Price

- Growth: \$159/month
- Basic: \$119/month
- Pro: \$319/month

Pros

- 24/7 customer support
- Live and [on-demand training](#)
- 25K+ support online community
- Full suite of digital products: courses, coaching, memberships, and podcasts
- [AI content creation tools](#)
- Email marketing automation pipelines

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Cons

- Higher price point within the market, however, users are willing to pay for the exceptional value it offers
- Not ideal for selling physical products, although Kajabi lets users link their Shopify store to their Kajabi pages

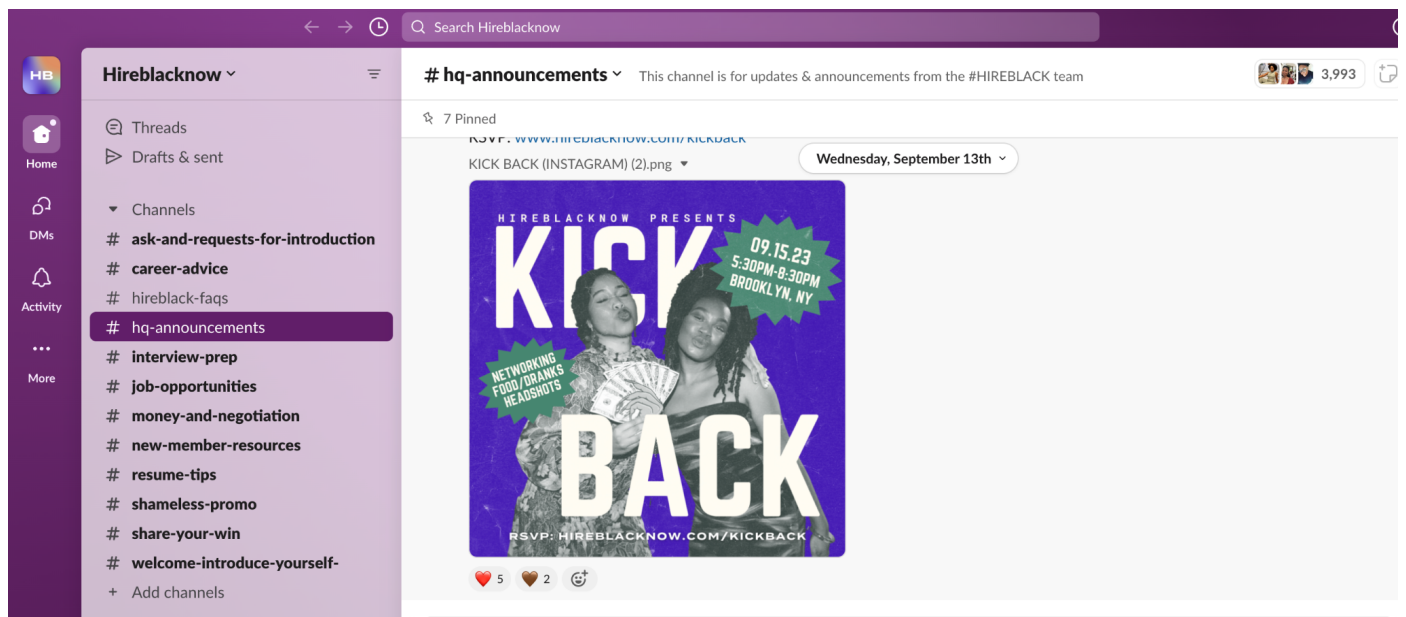
2. Slack

As of 2023, Slack has [20 million active users](#) on the platform. Chances are you've probably used Slack at work. Slack is a chat and collaboration tool used to build online communities, enable remote workforce collaboration for global enterprises, and connect people digitally across the globe.

Slack is an excellent community platform to brainstorm, plan, and communicate with people who live in different parts of the world. Plus, the platform makes it easy to keep things organized – online community leaders can create groups on specific topics where group members can join, share ideas, network, and plan in-person events.

For example, check out this "[Hireblacknow](#)" Slack group, started by a creator. The community group consists of hiring managers, corporate professionals, and freelancers looking to network and find their next job opportunity or gain tips on negotiating their next salary.

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Because Slack has its roots as an enterprise communication platform, many people who work in Fortune 500 companies and startups already use it at work. This makes adopting Slack feasible for many. If you're looking for a low-lift, cost-effective platform to start building a community, Slack can be a great option.

Keep in mind that the free version of Slack comes with a storage limit. As your community grows over time and members share resources such as files, videos, and PDFs, you may need to consider paying for additional storage to ensure continued support for your community.

Price

- Basic: FREE
- Slack Pro: \$7.25USD
- Business+ \$12.50 USD

Pros

- Free to get started
- Channels
- Direct-messaging
- Calls and video calls
- Popular among working professionals

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- Users can edit sent messages
- Supports a wide range of third-party integrations like email and calendar

Cons

- Slack's free feature offers only 5GB of storage for the entire workplace
- The free pricing tier doesn't support data retention for longer than 90 days
- Some voice chat features are behind a paywall

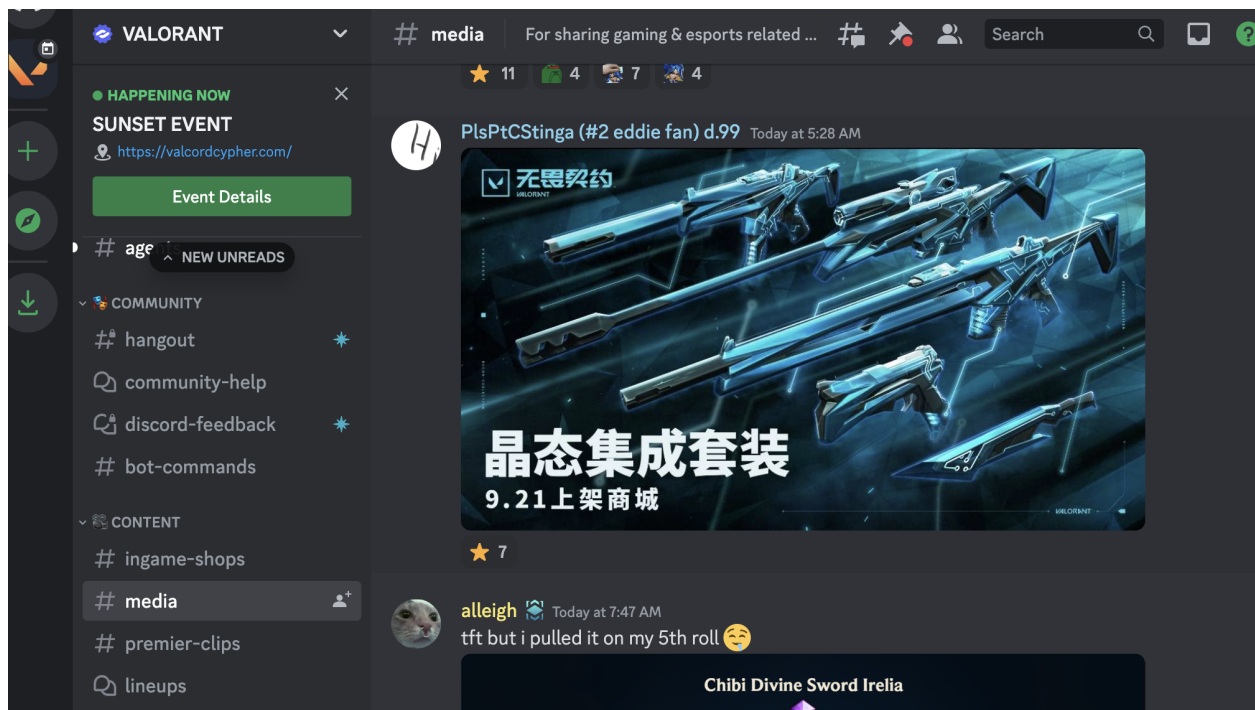
3. Discord

Originally [rooted in the gaming chat app space](#), Discord has evolved into a comprehensive communication service that consists of voice, video, and text capabilities. The platform is organized into servers, each of which can be further divided into individual channels.

If you're looking to bring together professional groups, Discord's online environment may throw some people off as they're not accustomed to online communities where members present themselves behind pseudonyms.

Let's consider the gaming community Discord group "[VALORANT](#)" as an example. One noticeable aspect is that members can easily use fake names, which can easily throw people off, especially if your audience is mainly professionals.

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If you decide to go with Discord, consider going a step further by encouraging users to complete an identification verification process before granting them access to your community group. However, bear in mind this additional step may potentially act as a barrier to some.

Discord's channels play a key role in keeping servers organized and making it easy for users to chat about specific topics. What's more, it empowers community owners with the ability to assign different roles and permissions to members within a server, which comes in handy for effective community moderation.

Price

- Nitro \$9.99
- Basic \$2.99

Pros

- Advanced moderation and forum capabilities
- User classification feature
- Supports audio communications
- Offers a forum functionality in case member chat rooms become too "noisy"
- Relatively cheap and has advanced features in the free pricing tier

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Cons

- Not ideal for professional groups
- Doesn't have many third-party integrations
- No data analytics functionality
- Threading capabilities are less advanced

4. Circle.so

Circle is a community platform that enables you to host your community, courses, and content all in one place. It simplifies community organization, offering creators and business owners the ability to group 'spaces' based on a theme or topic. You can think of spaces as similar to channels in Slack.

There are four types of spaces that online community owners can create: posts, events, chat, and courses.

When creating posts, you can include content such as text, images, and videos embedded from third-party platforms like Spotify, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Additionally, Circle provides three different layouts— which includes feed, list, and card views— for how content is displayed through feeds. Community members can also browse and RSVP for [upcoming events](#) through the 'Event' space and use the chat space to communicate with others in real time and share images, attachments, and links.

The course feature is only available through Circle's professional plan and allows you to add course descriptions, curriculums, and lessons. You can also customize "access" settings to open, private, or secret.

If you're a business owner seeking to complement your existing online business, offering an online community through Circle is a simple way to expand your audience. For example, you can embed your Circle community on your website which will prompt your audience to join your online community platform. However, if you're looking for an opportunity to build a strong brand presence on a community app, Circle can [fall short](#) in helping you create a powerful [brand identity](#) for your online business as its customization options are limited.

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Price

- Professional: \$89/month
- Business: \$199/month
- Enterprise: \$360/month
- Basic: \$49/month

Pros

- Social media integrations like Twitter and Facebook
- Integration with Zapier to connect with other apps
- Supports single-sign-on capabilities

Cons

- Lack of extensive customizable features to suit your brand
- Course creation is still in beta testing mode
- Limited marketing capabilities

5. Mighty Networks

Mighty Networks is a community platform that lets you build a community with content such as courses, memberships, events, live streaming, and more. Like Circle, Mighty Network's platform is made out of "spaces" which online business owners can group into collections.

Depending on what type of space you're trying to build, the platform comes with [readily-available templates](#) to choose from to help you get started when creating courses, chats, or feeds.

If you're looking for more flexibility in customizing your online community to align with your brand identity, the platform offers a 'Build Your Own' feature which allows you to create a space that perfectly matches your vision.

However, integrating with other platforms and tools [can be a bit of a challenge](#) with Mighty Networks. While you can use Zapier to link up with other apps, third-party integrations options are somewhat limited. Notably, Mighty Networks doesn't offer support for PayPal integration, [which is a big player](#) in the world of solo entrepreneurs.

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Price:

- Community (best for beginners): \$33/month
- Business: \$99/month

Pros

- Flexible when it comes to design and structure
- Live-streaming and live events
- Great for Android and iOS
- Valuable analytics and insights into member behavior, revenue tracking, and content performance

Cons

- Limited integration ability – you can only use Zapier to connect with some apps
- No support for PayPal
- Transaction fee on all plans

6. Wild Apricot

Wild Apricot employs cloud-based software to assist nonprofits and organizations in efficiently handling their [memberships](#), websites, and events.

If you're a large organization in search of a user-friendly community platform for your cross-functional teams to collaborate seamlessly, Wild Apricot simplifies the process. Additionally, if your organization regularly hosts events such as community chapters and conferences, Wild Apricot makes it easy to register both external and internal participants for various events. The platform has an email management feature that allows you to send targeted emails and easily segment your contacts based on various criteria.

While Wild Apricot offers robust community tools, it may [not be immediately intuitive](#) for users, and your team members might benefit from training to become confident in using the platform's features. Fortunately, the platform provides training videos to assist users in getting acquainted with its functionality. However, it's worth noting that this additional training may extend the onboarding process somewhat, so make sure to factor in ample time to allow you and your staff to get to know the product.

Price

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- Personal: \$60/month
- Group: \$75/month
- Community: \$140/month
- Professional: \$240/month
- Network: \$440/month
- Enterprise: \$530/month
- Global: \$900/month

Pros

- Extensive knowledge bases with video walkthroughs and tutorials
- Management system aimed at in-person clubs, nonprofits, churches, and organizations
- Robust event management feature

Cons

- Not geared toward individual creators and solopreneurs
- Interface has a somewhat [outdated feel](#), which imposes constraints on advanced customization options

7. Tribe

Tribe allows users to host their community, content, and communication all within one central app. The platform simplifies the process of learning, sharing, and building relationships with other community members. Notable features of the platform include custom domains, member profiles, groups, activity streaming, topic discussions, gamification elements, and effective moderation tools.

If you're running a small business, startup, or retailer and want to level up your customer support game while building stronger and more meaningful customer relationships, the Tribe community app platform can make the process easier for you. In the feedback and communication tool, online business owners can actively engage with customers in discussions, educate them, gather feedback, and keep them informed. Tribe also provides a 'Knowledge Base' feature that allows customers to find solutions to problems and assist each other. If you're an online business owner looking to nurture leads, Tribe is a wonderful community app to start.

Fun fact: Tribe currently hosts well-known brands such as IBM and ConvertKit.

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Price

There isn't a price listed on the website. Users are prompted to book a discovery call.

Pros

- Offers third-party integrations like Zoom and Notion
- Offers tools for attaching products and websites to the community
- Easily customizable
- Offers gamification and moderation
- Great for companies, e-commerce (retail)
- Compatible with desktop platforms

Cons

- Customization features are limited to only colors and graphics
- Pricing could be expensive as it is customized per user

8. Disciple Media

Disciple Media is a community platform that brings together people, memberships, and content in one place. The online community platform makes it easy for solopreneurs, creators and online businesses to build a strong brand identity through online customizable features such as colors, logos, and layouts.

You can collaborate and share ideas with community members through posts, polls, live streams, events, videos, blogs, photos, and private folders where content can be stored.

In addition to cultivating a community, Disciple Media also offers a course function that allows you to monetize your expertise. If you have plenty of tips and knowledge to share, you can create and sell online courses through the platform, which can further enhance your brand and attract a dedicated [following of learners](#) who are eager to benefit from your expertise.

Price

- Web: \$38/month
- Grow: \$499/month

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- Pro: \$833/month

Pros

- Caters to a vast majority of industry verticals
- Easily customizable
- iPhone and Android app friendly
- 24/7 live rep help
- Training through videos, webinars, in person, and online
- Third-party integrations, i.e., through YouTube, Zapier, and HubSpot

Cons

- Users might find the app experience is [less optimal](#) than the desktop experience.
- Inability to livestream from desktop

9. Podia

Podia serves as a one-stop-shop for your website, email marketing, and products. It also includes a handy online community feature that lets online business owners bring their audience and content together in one place. One of the key advantages of Podia is its user-friendly interface – whether you're a seasoned online entrepreneur or just starting out, Podia makes it easy to get started.

As an online business owner, you have the flexibility to customize access by choosing between open or closed community options. Plus, you can decide whether your content should be 'visible' or 'hidden.'

For a personal touch, you have the freedom to put your own 'brand stamp' on your community platform by adding an image to your community homepage – think of it like Facebook cover photos! However, it's worth noting that when it comes to extensive customization features, Podia [might not be the ideal platform](#) for building a highly customized brand presence.

While Podia does offer a course-building feature, it only allows for one content type per lesson. For instance, users [can't combine a video and PDF within the same lesson](#); they must be kept separate. This can result in courses appearing longer due to the individual content items.

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The community discussion feature that comes along with courses [enables students to engage with each other](#) and ask questions about the course materials. Students can also interact with the instructor through these discussions, creating a more interactive and personalized learning experience.

Price:

- Mover: \$33/month
- Shaker: \$75/month

Pros

- Great for online course building
- Community feature is available on both paid and free plan
- No transaction fees
- Includes email marketing customer messaging features
- Offers course-completion certificates
- Provides members access to products

Cons

- No phone support
- No mobile app feature
- Limited customization options
- No templates
- Has a more corporate feel

The top community platforms on social media

The great thing about building a community on social media is that it's free and easy to get started. Users are already forming communities and engaging with audiences through actions like gaining followers, receiving likes, and generating comments. However, as mentioned earlier, it's crucial to remember if you [rely solely on social media](#) platforms to build your audience, you won't have complete control.

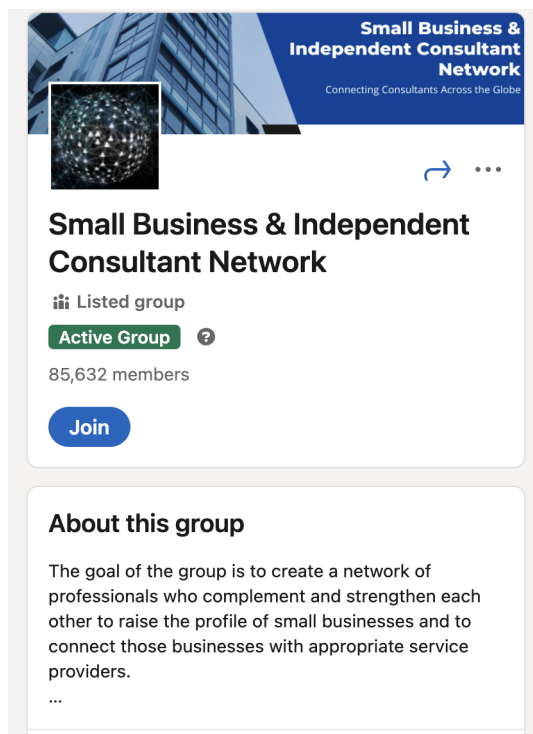
10. LinkedIn Groups

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LinkedIn is quite the social hub, boasting over [65 million](#) business decision makers. LinkedIn Groups offers professionals with shared interests an opportunity to seek guidance, acquire knowledge, collaborate on projects, and establish connections.

LinkedIn groups are like Facebook groups, however, they're specifically geared towards professions, industries, or professional interests. Users can use the search bar to look for a particular group, which will then display the group along with its description.

For example, when you search "Small Business & Independent Consultant Network" on LinkedIn, the following pops up:



Once users click into the group, they won't have access to the complete list of members, but they can view the group admins and any first-degree connections who are also members of the group. Users won't be able to engage or access any content until they have been accepted into the group.

To make it easier for potential members to join the group, you can [optimize your page](#) by creating a description that outlines who the community group is best suited for, along with the community rules and guidelines. Taking the example of the 'Small Business & Independent Consultant Network' mentioned above, you can see that the group's owner

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clearly identifies the intent and purpose of the group, eliminating any confusion about its purpose.

If you're an [expert in a specific niche](#), you can provide online courses on an external platform and encourage your community members to use your LinkedIn Group as a space for discussion, collaboration, and questions. However, if your goal is to create a comprehensive platform for monetizing your community, it's important to acknowledge that LinkedIn has its limitations— for instance, it doesn't offer digital products like courses. In this case, you may find a more suitable solution on a community platform like Kajabi that offers course-building functions.

Finally, while LinkedIn groups offer a straightforward way to kickstart your online community, LinkedIn business groups often lack visibility on the platform. Plus, there has been considerable discussion about the [decline in engagement within LinkedIn Groups](#).

Pros

- Sends out daily and weekly activity digests to keep members in the loop
- Allows you to post various types of content to your feed, including articles, videos, and text
- Provides analytics on members and engagement metrics
- Community members can approve or reject community posts
- Pin feature to highlight content on feeds

Cons

- Has limited functionality for digital products
- Community owners don't own their audience data
- Algorithms can negatively impact community engagement
- Groups on LinkedIn don't have much visibility

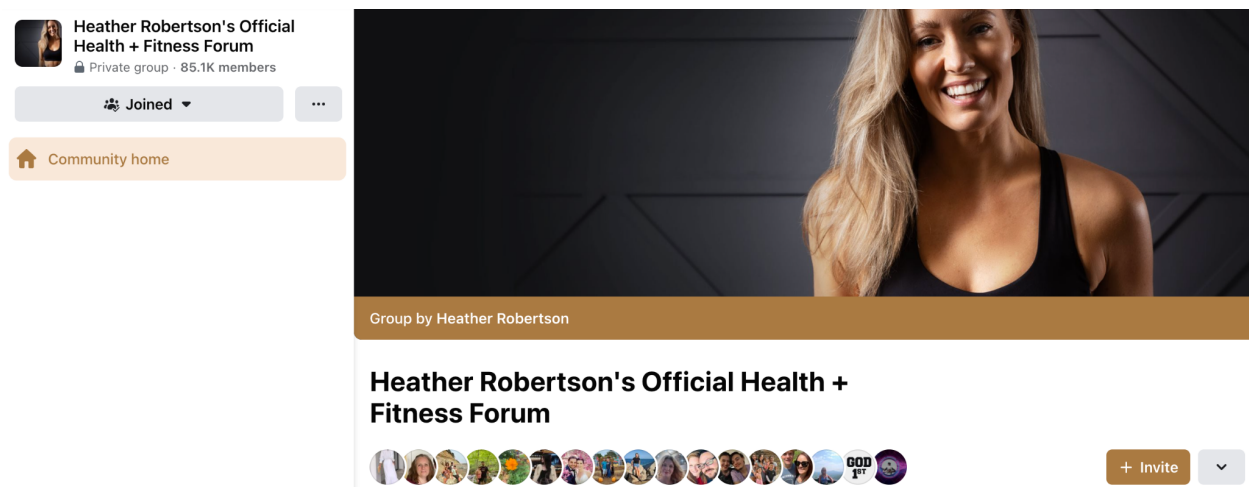
11. Facebook Groups

Facebook Groups is considered the OG community app. Facebook Groups are where friends, acquaintances, and people with a shared interest can come together and discuss a wide range of topics and ideas. With over [1.4 billion people](#) using Facebook Groups every month, the platform is a great tool for small business owners, creators, and entrepreneurs to connect with their audience and build genuine connections.

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You can find a Facebook group for almost any niche: travel, fitness, food, entertainment – the options are endless. After all, Facebook has over [3 billion users](#) on the platform – needless to say, there’s a huge opportunity on the platform to reach your target audience on a global scale.

For example, one creator doing Facebook Groups right is Heather Robertson, fitness guru and instructor. Not only does she have a robust, engaged YouTube community following of over [2 million](#) fans, but she also supports her audience in their fitness journeys by sharing exclusive fitness tips, recipes, guides, and resources in an exclusive Facebook Group of over 80,000 members as pictured below:



If you're a creator, entrepreneur, or online business owner, owning a Facebook Group is a cost-effective way to build your brand. However, it's hard to monetize your audience in Facebook Groups as you are at the whims of the Meta.

Pros

- Ideal for small business owners to grow their business and reach their [target audience](#)
- Great for branding
- Private and public group settings

Cons

- No control over algorithms

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- Organization can get tricky – there’s no “central” place to host everything
- You can easily lose your platform if Facebook decides to shut your group
- It’s easy for random people to come across your page
- You do not own audience data such as emails
- [Competition is fierce](#) (i.e. TikTok)

12. WhatsApp Community

WhatsApp is a free instant messaging app that has over [2 billion users worldwide](#). WhatsApp Communities makes it easy to manage multiple groups by bringing them together in topic-based groups and offers features like chats, voice, and video calls.

When an admin creates a new community, multiple groups can exist under the community umbrella for convenient communication and management — think of them as 'subgroups.' Besides the community app's default announcement group, users have the option to add up to 50 subgroups under the community umbrella. Each group can hold up to 5,000 members.

While WhatsApp provides [end-to-end encryption](#) to secure messages and calls among community members, it's important to acknowledge the growing concerns about [WhatsApp privacy over the years](#). In order to maintain a safe environment for your members, [set and enforce community guidelines](#). You can use moderation tools that allow admins to delete inappropriate messages and media for all members of a group.

Pros

- Great for organizing in-person events
- Available for use in 180 different countries
- Available to anyone on iOS or android
- Admins can add up to 32 people on calls
- Has an announcement group where only admins can share updates
- Assign admins controls
- Built-in poll feature in messages
- File sharing

Cons

- Concerns over privacy and the spread of misinformation

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- All community member numbers are visible, which can pose a privacy
- Limited community-building features make it difficult to grow a large community on the platform
- Most users use WhatsApp for personal messaging

Tips for running a successful online community app

Needless to say, because your community members are investing their hard-earned money on your online community platform, what you offer them needs to be valuable. Now that we've reviewed different community app options, here are some tips as you get started with your online community:

1. **Maximize engagement.** Use features like polls, surveys, live Q&A, and encourage member collaboration. For instance, Kajabi provides accountability tools designed to assist members in tracking their progress and maintaining motivation.
2. **Optimize your page.** Craft a warm video that welcomes members to your platform. In the video, introduce yourself, outline what you're offering, and provide guidance on navigating the platform effectively.
3. **Manage your community.** Create spaces for your customers to offer feedback and suggestions regarding your community content and ensure responsive support.
4. **Maintain a safe online experience.** Craft straightforward and concise [community guidelines](#), and ensure that community members follow and abide by the rules.
5. **Consider your audience.** It's important to keep in mind your audience when choosing a platform to build a community. Understanding their needs, interests, and preferences will help you choose a platform that best caters to their needs.

The power of a community app

Building a thriving community is more important now than ever for creators and business owners seeking to monetize their audience. There are numerous benefits to building a community, including recurring income, brand loyalty, and a sense of ownership. While

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there are currently many community app products available on the market, it's crucial to choose community apps that offer extensive features that allow you to build a powerful online community. Kajabi not only offers a robust community feature for you to nurture your audience, but it also has a variety of tools such as podcasting, online courses, coaching, and membership sites for you to monetize and own your audience outside of social media! [Sign-up for your free trial today.](#)