



The Power of Community

How Phenomenal Leaders Inspire Their Teams, Wow Their Customers and Make Bigger Profits

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

It seems the more connected we are through email, smartphones and social media, the more disconnected we become on a personal, human level — and teamwork suffers tremendously. If this is happening in your company, fear not. The solution is here.

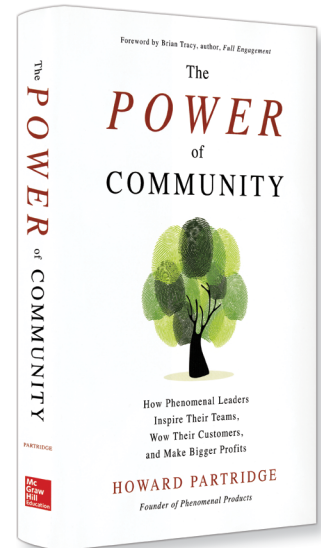
The Power of Community provides a step-by-step approach to transforming your organization by tapping into the human need to connect with and feel valued by others. By creating a company culture based on core community values, you'll empower your workforce, build customer loyalty, and drive profits and growth.

This game-changing guide describes why “community” is the answer to employee disengagement — which is now at a record 70 percent — and it explains how to develop the kind of culture that makes an industry leader of your business. It takes hard work and determination, but the rewards will astound you.

When people feel they're part of something bigger than themselves, they're more collaborative, creative and innovative — and this will always drive organizational success. Everyone wins in *The Power of Community*.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why leadership is essential for building community.
- Three keys that unlock community and six steps for building community.
- Strategies to encourage your people and inspire emotional trust.
- To develop your community systems and create your community brand experience.



by Howard Partridge

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

by Howard Partridge

The author: Howard Partridge is an international business coach with coaching members in over 100 industries in nine countries. He is a best-selling author of seven books, an executive vice president of Ziglar, Inc. and director of training operations. He is the founder and president of Phenomenal Products, Inc., which helps business owners and leaders improve their organizations by improving their leadership skills and systems.

Adapted by arrangement with McGraw-Hill Global Education Holdings, LLC, from *The Power of Community: How Phenomenal Leaders Inspire Their Teams, Wow Their Customers and Make Bigger Profits*, Copyright © 2018 by Howard Partridge, 224 pages, \$28, ISBN 978-1-2601-1716-5.

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Why We Need Community

Today, more than ever before, strangers on a screen influence people's minds, molding their beliefs, instilling fear rather than hope. Communication has been reduced to emails, instant messages, sound bites and tweets.

The challenge for leaders today is to make our work more compelling than whatever is happening in the media or what's happening on a team member's screen. That's a tall order and a big part of the reason we need a sense of community in our workplaces.

We can make our work so meaningful to our team members that they will engage at an unprecedented level. Building a sense of belonging — a sense of community — in our companies is the answer. The reason we need community is to re-engage our team members. It's the only weapon powerful enough to disrupt the digital disconnect that happens in every company today.

All leadership experts agree that culture is the most important thing in any business. The solution is to define your culture and create a sense of belonging by creating a culture of community.

The challenge when bringing people together in the world today is that each of us has different values, a different personality and different ways of dealing with conflict. Each one of us has a different vision of the way work and life should be.

Leadership Is Essential for Building Community

In order to transform your organization, you'll have to build a foundation on leadership. Before leaders are able to change their culture to create community in

their organization, they must first learn to be better leaders. Phenomenal leadership is creating a community experience that inspires the team to implement. In order to accomplish that, leaders need two things: We must have a meaningful, compelling vision, and we must learn to communicate well. Leadership is effectively communicating your vision.

Leadership can communicate most effectively in the context of community. When a group of people feel like they belong to one another, they feel cared for and they believe that the vision is worth sacrificing for, they will go the extra mile for the company. There's no stopping a group of people who not only have the same vision and values but feel like they belong to one another — and know their team has their back.

If you think about the word community for a moment, it really means "communicating in unity." Communicating is just one part of the equation. Unity is the other part. It's only when we are truly connecting that we're really unified. Or better put — when we're unified, we connect better.

But first, understanding what can take away the sense of community is vital to re-establishing it. ●

How We Lost Our Sense of Community

At the beginning of the 20th century, for the first time in human history more of the world's population lived in cities than in rural communities. As the locomotive and the automobile became a part of normal life, the Industrial Revolution steamed forward. The factory, rather than



1-800-SUMMARY
service@summary.com

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Rebecca S. Clement, Publisher; Sarah T. Dayton, Editor in Chief; Ashleigh Imus, Senior Editor; Masiel Tejada, Graphic Designer; A. Imus, Contributing Editor

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the family farm, became the “normal” workplace, which brought tough management systems. As strangers worked next to one another, they became just another cog in the wheel of industry. “Command and control” management was the order of the day during the Industrial Revolution.

In the 1960s there was another major shift. Data clearly shows a direct correlation between the rise of technology and the decline of face-to-face social groups. Live television brought Watergate, the Vietnam War and the assassinations of JFK and MLK into our living rooms. A media of strangers began to instill fear rather than hope into our lives on a massive scale. Television also became the new babysitter.

Artificial intelligence is another trend that promises lifelike companionship with a machine. Machines give humans extraordinary experiences, but nothing can replace a real relationship. The more accustomed we become to relating to images on screens, in “virtual” environments, and soon with artificial beings, the farther we move from real community. A virtual community is an oxymoron.

Phenomenal Leaders Build Real Relationships

All of business and all of life is about relationships. Phenomenal leaders understand that humans are starving for authentic relationships.

Many business owners and leaders worry that if they get too close to their employees, they will be taken advantage of. They fear the employee will fail to perform and will expect leniency. Although that is certainly a possibility, you can build a meaningful personal relationship while maintaining a strong professional relationship. Most people haven’t learned how to be authentic with one another and therefore have not been able to maintain the balance between the two. This is a relationship skill that can be developed.

Positive relationships are built on trust and respect. Before we care for something, we have to value it. Before we respect someone, we must value that person. This is why the first step in building community is valuing people. Not for what they’ve done but for who they are. Human beings have inherent value and should be respected and dignified for that.

Creating a sense of community is possible. Let’s now learn the three keys that can unlock community in your organization and six concrete steps you can follow to take the sense of community to the next level. ●

Three Keys That Unlock True Community

Before reaching the ultimate goal of true community, you’ll first need to create a sense of belonging, which can lead to a sense of community. Your first goal is simply to get your team members feeling like they belong to something meaningful rather than just going to a job every day.

The three keys to creating *true* community are support, encouragement and accountability. The three keys look like this in a business environment — the Six Steps to Building Community are outlined with two steps under each key.

- **Support.** Helping your team members reach their goals and realize their dreams. Step 1 is Value True Community, and Step 2 is Pursue Champion Connections.
- **Encouragement.** Inspiring your team members to do the things they may be afraid to do. This key unlocks Step 3: Inspire Emotional Trust and Step 4: Practice Gift Exchange.
- **Accountability.** Providing feedback to your team members so they can become the persons they need to be. The third key brings us to Step 5: Invite Open-hearted Encounters and Step 6: Build Growth PODs.

The First Key: Support. Many employees feel that no one cares about them. What if you started helping your team members reach their goals in life? This is a major key to the whole idea of community. In order to get support, we have to give support. By supporting them — by going the extra mile to help them reach their personal goals — you’ll earn their support in your efforts to reach the goals of the organization.

The Second Key: Encouragement. Encouragement is what inspires people to do the things they don’t feel like doing, the things they fear doing and the things they don’t know they can do. As Zig Ziglar said, “Encouragement is the fuel on which hope runs.” In today’s world it’s rare for a boss or manager to give an “Attaboy” or “Attagirl” to an employee, but your business can be the place where people get the emotional fuel they are starving for. The Dale Carnegie Institute has long taught that what employees want more than anything is sincere and honest appreciation.

The Third Key: Accountability. Accountability is key to becoming the person you were created to be.

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That's because it is only by being accountable that you can discover and develop your gifts and help others discover and develop theirs. In practical terms, being accountable means being true to your own values — to what you believe is important in life. And if you want to build true community in your organization, you have to determine the values that will guide that community and make sure that every member of your team, every individual in the community, operates by those values.

As an owner or manager it is essential that you create an atmosphere of accountability, which means you have to take the first step by being accountable toward others. In order to do that, you have to live a life of accountability yourself. Once you are living an accountable life, both personally and professionally — and the two are connected — you will be able to promote that value in your organization.

Now let's learn about the Six Steps to Building Community at a deeper level. ●

Step 1: Value True Community

The first of the Six Steps to Building Community is to value true community. We cannot build something we do not value. Valuing true community is assessing your vital need for deep, trusting relationships with people of shared beliefs to help one another become all you can be.

When we value something at a high level, we tend to protect it and promote it. Your team members can be your greatest asset or your biggest liability, and that depends on your skill as a leader.

Supporting others is being the “human bridge” that helps others have the life they want to have. You can begin the process of supporting others by simply asking those on your team about their personal goals and dreams. It might be to buy a house, run a marathon or learn a skill. You can then begin to help them in those endeavors.

You might also call this the Law of Reciprocity, which in essence says, “If you help me, I'll help you.” President Dwight Eisenhower proclaimed, “Leadership [is] the art of getting someone else to do something that you want done because he wants to do it.” Why would the person want to do it? Because you've added value to him or her. You've helped the person get what he or she wants. Not just at work but at home.

How do you value relationships? How do you value others? How do you value shared beliefs, shared values and shared goals?

A Leader Is a Coach

Community begins with coaching. When you value someone, you spend time with the person getting to know him or her. Instead of seeing yourself as a boss or manager, start viewing yourself as a coach. The origin of the word “coach” is “carriage,” which is simply a vehicle to help people get from where they are to where they want or need to be.

A boss is just someone who tells others what to do. The employees may do what you say, but they may be disgruntled as they do it.

When you truly care about others, you'll coach them to success. Impactful leadership is about “care and coach” rather than command and control. A leader is not a manager. Leaders develop people.

Of course, at the same time, as a leader, you must avoid creating a sense of entitlement. Supporting someone is not doing everything for him or her or providing everything for him or her. Supporting someone personally is helping him or her with information, physical help, contacts or resources. If people are not doing their part, a coaching session is in order to talk about their role in helping themselves. ●

Step 2: Pursue Champion Connections

Pursuing champion connections means investing intentionally in relationships that have the potential to become strong alliances of support and mission. On the inside of your organization, you'll want to begin by selecting a couple of people on your leadership team who you know are loyal to you. Begin intentionally investing in those relationships, and then you can expand the size of the group from there.

Find out what these leaders' personal and professional goals are. Find out what their personal values are. Share your vision with them and get input from them.

Your first small group will become the heartbeat of the company. This is where you'll flesh out the vision for your company. This is where you'll talk about what really matters in the company. You'll develop your mission, values and purpose together. This is where you'll learn how to create community together and you'll “do life together.”

We need to pursue champion connections not only inside the company but outside the company as well. Outside the company, we need to intentionally invest in

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relationships that have the potential of becoming strong alliances of support and mission.

Attracting a Strong Community

Building community inside and outside your company creates a powerful combination that will inspire you and your team to greater heights in your business.

Your best clients, team members, vendors and associates will most likely come from your intentional relationship-building activities. Here's a simple process to attract phenomenal team members.

Identify people who have the same values you do.

In other words, you have the same worldview, you have the same outlook on life. Diversity of gifts is important, but having similar values helps build a strong community.

Identify future candidates. When marketing your company, you don't wait until you need a customer to start marketing. In much the same way, you don't wait until you need a team member to build a relationship with him or her. Always keep your eyes out for future talent. The most important function as a leader is to hire the right person with the right kind of values and gifts for your community.

Add value to them (even if they aren't on the team yet). Add value to everyone you meet, and they will be attracted to you and to your company. Find ways to support people you want on your team. Find ways to encourage them. When you're continually investing in those you want on your team and you're investing in enough of them, you'll always have people attracted to you.

Now let's talk about how to move from support to encouragement. ●

Step 3: Inspire Emotional Trust

The second key to building community is encouragement. Encouragement is the emotional fuel people need to do the things they are afraid to do. Encouragement means to give courage.

Getting rid of fear is not the goal. Instead, try to show them they can find success by moving forward in the face of fear. That's courage. As a leader, you can be an encourager to your team, and that will inspire emotional trust, which simply means that others will trust you with their emotions. The reason that's important is that you haven't truly connected with someone until you know his or her true feelings and that he or she is buying into you and your vision.

Here are a number of ways to encourage people:

Know their story. You may have employees whose loved ones are struggling with cancer, or maybe they have other tremendous challenges that you don't know about. Or you may have a common interest that you're unaware of. Someone once said, "Everyone is lovable when you get to know their story."

Affirm their value. Every human being has inherent value, but most people suffer from a poor self-image and need someone to affirm their value. Encourage people to do the things they fear. Encourage them to pursue their biggest dreams in life. Encourage them to lead.

Recognize their gifts. Every human being has a gift and potential. It is leaders' job to help their team members discover their gifts and develop them. When you help people discover their gifts, you will encourage them greatly.

Encouragement means helping others find their purpose. Just as most people don't know what their potential is, they don't know what their purpose is. When you've inspired emotional trust in someone's life, you're likely to help that person find his or her purpose. To inspire emotional trust, follow these four steps:

- **Demonstrate commitment to the individual.** Show people you care about them by inquiring about how they are doing as a person. Show them you care by spending time with them. Seek to understand before being understood, as the old saying goes.
- **Invest time understanding their heart.** When investing time with people, ask them about their life. Learn about their biggest desires and biggest fears in life. Hopefully by this point, you've proved that you truly do care about them as people, not just as employees.
- **Affirm their value.** Most human beings can't see their inherent value, much less their future potential. A great leader helps others see their potential future.
- **Give them hope.** Give people hope by sharing inspirational stories of others who have overcome and perhaps from your own personal life if you've had to overcome difficulties. ●

Step 4: Practice Gift Exchange

As part of the encouragement key, practicing gift exchange is nurturing specific relationships that mutually recognize and promote one another's strengths and talents in an intentional manner. A championship team is made up of talented individuals with tremendous gifts, skills and

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talents. But they win only if they communicate well and if they recognize and promote one another's gifts.

For example, Tom Brady, quarterback for the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots, has a different skill set than tight end Rob Gronkowski. Different positions require different talents. They are both extremely talented, but if they don't communicate — if each doesn't do his job — they fail together. Not only do they have to communicate, they have to support each other, encourage each other and hold each other accountable to win consistently. We win together and we fail together. That's community. If you think of yourself as a coach, your job as a leader is to develop your players.

How to Develop Your Team Members

Here are some steps to take to develop your team members:

Facilitate personality profiles. There are many behavior assessments and personality profiles available: DISC, Myers-Briggs, Flag Pages, Birkman and more.

Implement personal development training. There are many ways to implement a personal development program in your company: facilitate a growth POD (see Step 6 for explanation); host a formal training; invite a guest speaker; use video technology, outside training courses or private mentoring and coaching.

Discover gifts and talents. There are a number of assessments that can help you and your team members discover their unique talents. In addition to MBTI and DISC, StrengthsFinder is an assessment that helps individuals identify their strengths and talents through a series of 177 questions. The Birkman Method is a behavioral assessment that measures people's needs, evaluates people's personality and perceptions in social settings, draws a correlation between attitude and performance in a work environment, and provides participants with career choices unique to their working styles. The RIASEC assessment is a personality evaluation that groups people's personalities into six basic career fields; this helps people find a job that is suitable to their personality.

Develop the team professionally. Find ways to help team members grow in their areas of expertise. In addition to technical training, consider leadership training as a path for professional growth. In order to develop leaders, people need to know how to lead. Most managers fall into the "command and control" trap, but when you have them trained in the right kind of leadership philosophy, you can replace yourself in many areas, and you now have people who can lead new teams to grow your organization. ●

Step 5: Invite Openhearted Encounters

It's time to talk about the third key: accountability. Far too often, business owners or managers try to hold people accountable without a relationship. When accountability is done right, people will *want* to be accountable. They will *want* to be better. There's a big difference between forcing someone to be accountable and inviting someone into accountability through support and encouragement.

For our purposes, accountability is helping others become the persons they need to be. To help your team members develop themselves, grow to their full potential and be as valuable as they can to the community, you need to build a culture of accountability that says, "I care enough about you to help you become the person you want to be." As with the other keys, in order to offer this level of accountability to someone else, you must live it yourself.

The fifth step, "openhearted encounters," means to embrace the power of transparent experiences with faithful friends — permitting them to speak honestly and ask piercing questions.

Inviting "openhearted encounters" helps each of us become the person we need to be, and leaders who help their team members accomplish that will not only be followed but will be loved as well. Creating these kinds of relationships is also an important element of promoting community in an organization. In this sense it means providing feedback to your team members so they can become the people they need to become.

How to Coach Without Drama

Many business owners and managers don't do a great job of coaching someone who misses the mark. Calling someone out is awkward and uncomfortable. However, when support, encouragement and accountability are part of the culture, when you've followed the first four steps of creating a culture of community and when you've outlined your systems, coaching becomes much easier.

Keep in mind that a leader is a coach — and a good coach asks questions. You can coach someone to success simply by asking questions. The following questions cut to the chase:

- Do you know what to do?
- Do you know how to do it?
- Do you have the tools and resources you need?

The goal of a coaching session is simply to determine whether you're dealing with an *aptitude* issue or an *attitude*

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issue. In other words, is it a skill problem or a motivation problem? A simple question is, “Are we still the right fit for you?” Notice, this is not “You’re not the right fit for us.” You can respect team members and give them dignity by phrasing the question that way.

And notice that this is a question rather than a statement. Sometimes people join the team with a great amount of zeal but lose interest. If that’s the case, let them decide to go somewhere else. Can you see how simply asking questions helps them make the decision?

In order for us to give proper feedback to our team, to hold them accountable to the values we’ve adopted and to invite them into openhearted encounters, we must be vulnerable enough to enter that space as leaders ourselves. True community means you have people around you who tell you the truth even when it hurts. It may take a while to get to this point in a relationship and with your team members, but it is possible, and the rewards are worth the climb. ●

Step 6: Build Growth PODS

The sixth and final step in building community involves developing small groups called PODS, which stands for Power of Discovery Systems. A Growth POD is a small group that meets on a regular basis that not only helps move individuals toward true accountability but also helps spread community throughout the organization.

The purpose of the POD is to foster more effective communication. Over time, these groups can move people from a sense of community to a true community experience of belonging and transformation. Unlike what happens in a traditional meeting, in which one person speaks to the group, interaction is encouraged in a POD meeting.

These purpose-minded life-support groups can be used for almost any reason — to reach company goals, keep a project moving forward, achieve personal goals, change habits or develop members’ skills or gifts.

PODS, typically made up of seven to nine individuals, are designed to allow participants to discover what they need to do or who they need to become rather than being taught (or, worse, *told*). When people discover something themselves, they feel a sense of ownership, which makes it more likely that they will implement it.

The Practice of the POD

A POD can be used to share information, to simply build relationships or to complete a specific task. To learn and practice the POD, start with your two closest, most

trusted team members. This is your leadership team — your inner circle — your guiding team.

Regardless of the type of leading you are doing, *less is more*. Share less information to get more implementation. The length of a POD can vary, but typically it will be from 60 to 90 minutes.

Each of the five parts of a POD begins with the letter I. The five Is of a POD are

1. **Icebreaker.** Engage each and every participant.
 2. **Information.** Share relevant information.
 3. **Interaction.** Facilitate a discussion around the information.
 4. **Implementation.** Request an action item from each participant based on the information discussed.
 5. **Inspiration.** Close with something inspirational. ●
-

Develop Your Community Systems

Every tribe and every community has its unique ways of doing things. In other words, all of them have systems. Installing systems in your business will help you live out the essence of community but also comes with additional benefits.

A system is simply a group of working parts that make up the whole. The five Ps of building your community system are purpose, positions, PRDs (performance results descriptions), policies and procedures:

Purpose. The “why” of your organization is its purpose. Why does your organization exist? What difference does it make in the world? What void would exist if your company or organization didn’t exist? The biggest reason you want to have a meaningful purpose is to connect what each of your team members does every day to the difference it makes in your customer’s life. Inspiration happens when your team members understand why they are doing what they are doing and how it makes a difference in the lives of their customers.

Positions. The next step is to identify your team positions. There are five systems of a business and three levels of leadership. The five systems are leadership, marketing, sales, operations and administration. The three levels of leadership are directing, managing and implementing.

PRDs. A performance results description (PRD), similar to a job description, outlines the results that are required for that position and the performance that is expected to achieve the results. An example might be a

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sales goal (result) and the number of calls to be made in a day (performance) to reach that goal.

Policies. Every game has boundaries and rules of the game. In your organization, your employee handbook would be a good example of a set of policies, but you also want to have policies attached to the PRD. For example, if the bookkeeper's responsibility is to make daily bank deposits, you would have a policy of when those deposits are to be made.

Procedures. Procedures are the "how to" of the business. For each major task, outline the steps or the script for each one. Staying with the bookkeeper analogy, you would outline the step-by-step procedures on how the deposit is done.

When you systematize your organization, your community will be able to deliver the community experience *consistently*. ●

Create Your Community Brand Experience

The final phase of this journey is extending your community brand experience to your customers, clients, guests, patients, donors or members.

What sets a company apart more than anything else is the customer experience. And at the top of the food chain of experiences is a community brand experience. An experience properly created invokes emotion that in turn inspires people. A community brand experience is one in which your clients feel like they belong to your brand.

Starbucks has done an amazing job with this. In fact, the creation of Starbucks as we know it today came from a "community epiphany" Howard Schultz had in Milan, Italy. At the time he was the national marketing director for Starbucks — a small Seattle-based company that sold coffee beans to coffee enthusiasts. At that time, Starbucks didn't offer coffee drinks.

Howard Schultz's epiphany came as he tasted an espresso in a corner espresso bar amidst the sun-drenched Italian architecture. He realized that community was happening right before his eyes. Neighbors met for a latte. Couples romanced over a cappuccino, and businessmen negotiated over an espresso. As they came and went on their Vespas, Howard Schultz imagined re-creating that community experience back in Seattle. The owners of Starbucks wouldn't have it.

Schultz left the company and started his own little chain of espresso bars called Il Giornale (named after

a Milanese newspaper). He later bought Starbucks and created one of the greatest examples of a community brand experience ever.

The Three Es of Experience

The three Es of Experience outline a simple way to outline the community brand experience:

- 1. Engage.** Engagement is how you interact with someone. The goal is to connect in a personal, meaningful way to get the experience off to a good start.
- 2. Educate.** Education is simply helping people understand the brand so that they can make the right choices throughout the experience.
- 3. Entertain.** Serve your target audience by creating experiences for them. Entertainment isn't exclusive to funny videos or theatrics but involves "going the extra mile" and serving your clients in a way that is meaningful to them, that also can grow into a relationship that feels like community.

When you intentionally build community in your company and then intentionally create community experiences for your customers, clients, patients, members, donors or guests, you'll make a meaningful contribution to their lives — and you'll also be poised to make bigger profits.

The gift of support, encouragement and accountability is the most special gift of all: who you become as a leader and who your team members become. When you discover how to have an impact in another person's life, it's the most satisfying feeling in the world.

The time is now for business owners and managers to step up and become phenomenal leaders. We all need the gift of support, encouragement and accountability to have the phenomenal life we all deserve. ●

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