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COMMUNITY BUILDING HANDBOOK

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY AND HOW TO STRENGTHEN IT?

THIS HANDBOOK...

This handbook was commissioned by the Marketing and Communications Department and the Faculty of Engineering Technology.

As described in Shaping2030, **strong communities are a priority in shaping individuals, connections and society. In the meantime**, much has been said about communities and community building without going into the how, what, who, when and why. In this document we lay down the basis for community building for the UT. The handbook has been written with the aim of **supporting everyone at the University of Twente (UT) in setting up and strengthening communities.**

The handbook is a generic resource on community building, with the applicability of various passages from the handbook depending on the group concerned. The handbook is specifically **useful for individuals working in a connecting or promotional role**, e.g., community management/support and employee branding, **but could be of use for everyone.**

This manual consists of 2 parts:

Phase 1: A Community *(what, when, why)*
Phase 2: Community Building *(how, who)*

Finally, this handbook advised to be used together with the **complementary guide**, as it will give you in-depth information on all the slides of this handbook. Moreover, it includes **results of a case study** in which the handbook was used.

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01. A COMMUNITY

ONE COMMON DEFINITION. CLARIFICATION ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN A COMMUNITY, TEAM AND NETWORK. DESIRABLE OBJECTIVES FOR USING COMMUNITY BUILDING AS A MEANS.

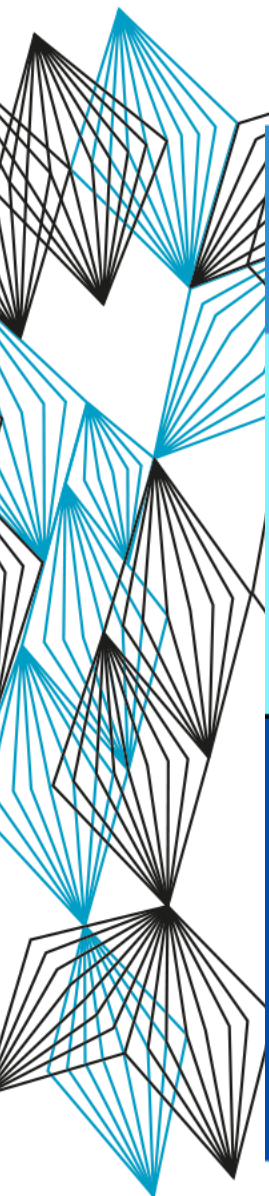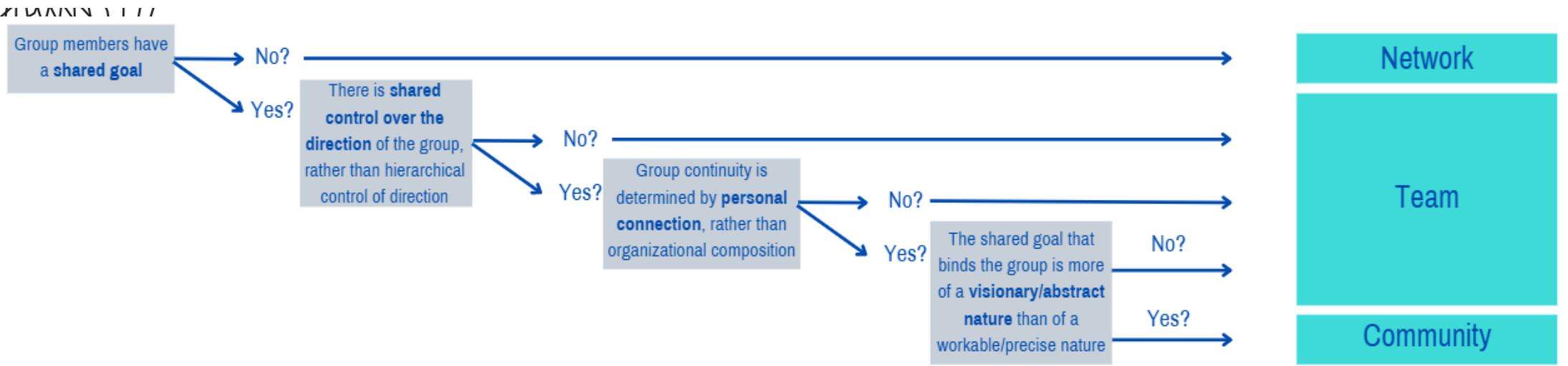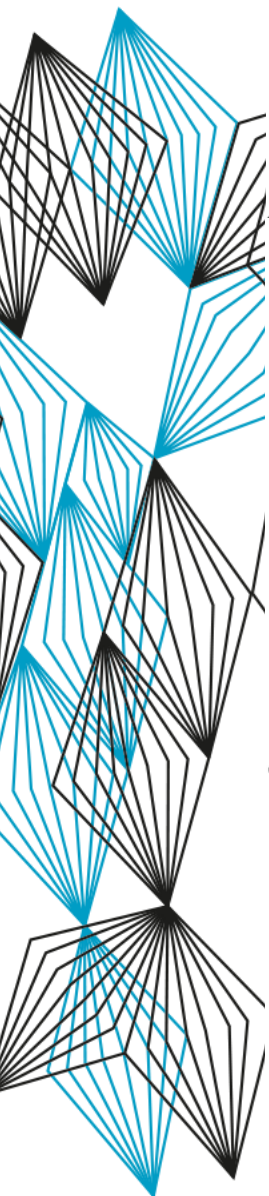| 01 | DEFINITION | Everybody talks about it, but let's start by defining the concept of Community Building |
| 02 | FLOWCHART | Take a look at characteristics to discover whether you are talking about a community, a team, or a network. |
| 03 | POSSIBLE GOALS PER CONTEXT | Community building is only a means to a goal. Be aware of the contextual influence on these goals. |

WORKING DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

WHAT IS COMMUNITY BUILDING?

Community building is the effort to increase the **"sense of community"** among a group of people.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Based on McMillan & Chavis (1986)
(For an comprehensive definition, see article)

"A feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together."

MEMBERSHIP

The feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness

INFLUENCE

A sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members

INTEGRATION & FULFILLMENT OF NEEDS

The feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group

SHARED EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

The commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time, and similar experiences together.

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For a comprehensive definition and more information, see the article by McMillan & Chavis (1986)

COMMUNITY, TEAM OR NETWORK: IT'S ALL ABOUT GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Group members have a **shared goal**

No? → Network

Yes? → There is **shared control over the direction** of the group, rather than hierarchical control of direction

No? → Team

Yes? → Group continuity is determined by **personal connection**, rather than organizational composition

No? → Team

Yes? → The shared goal that binds the group is more of a **visionary/abstract nature** than of a workable/precise nature

No? → Team

Yes? → Community

Having a shared goal means that individual members do not follow their own interests, but come together to contribute to a common goal.

Shared control is about the absence of hierarchy. Members may assume roles, but decision-making authority rests with each member.

Unlike teams, the existence of communities is less likely to be affected by changes in organizational composition. Groups are formed based on voluntary participation and shared interests.

The goal of the community is characterized by a certain degree of ideality. *"Create a sustainable world"* instead of *"Decrease emissions by 10% in 5 years"*

No value judgment has been made in the above breakdown, as one is not necessarily better than the other. The group characteristics determine which means have the best chance of achieving the goal. In this document we will focus on community building.

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GOALS & CONTEXT: ORGANIZATION - RELATION - ECOSYSTEM

Organizational context

Within the organizational boundaries are diverse individuals who together form different communities. These communities range from very strong to moderate/weak. All together they form the organizational population. The possible influence of the organization here is medium to high.

Strong communities within the organization positively influence:
- wellbeing
- employee & student satisfaction
- employee & student engagement
- personal development
- quality improvement
- pride & ambassadorship
- connection to university and educational programme.
- sense of belonging
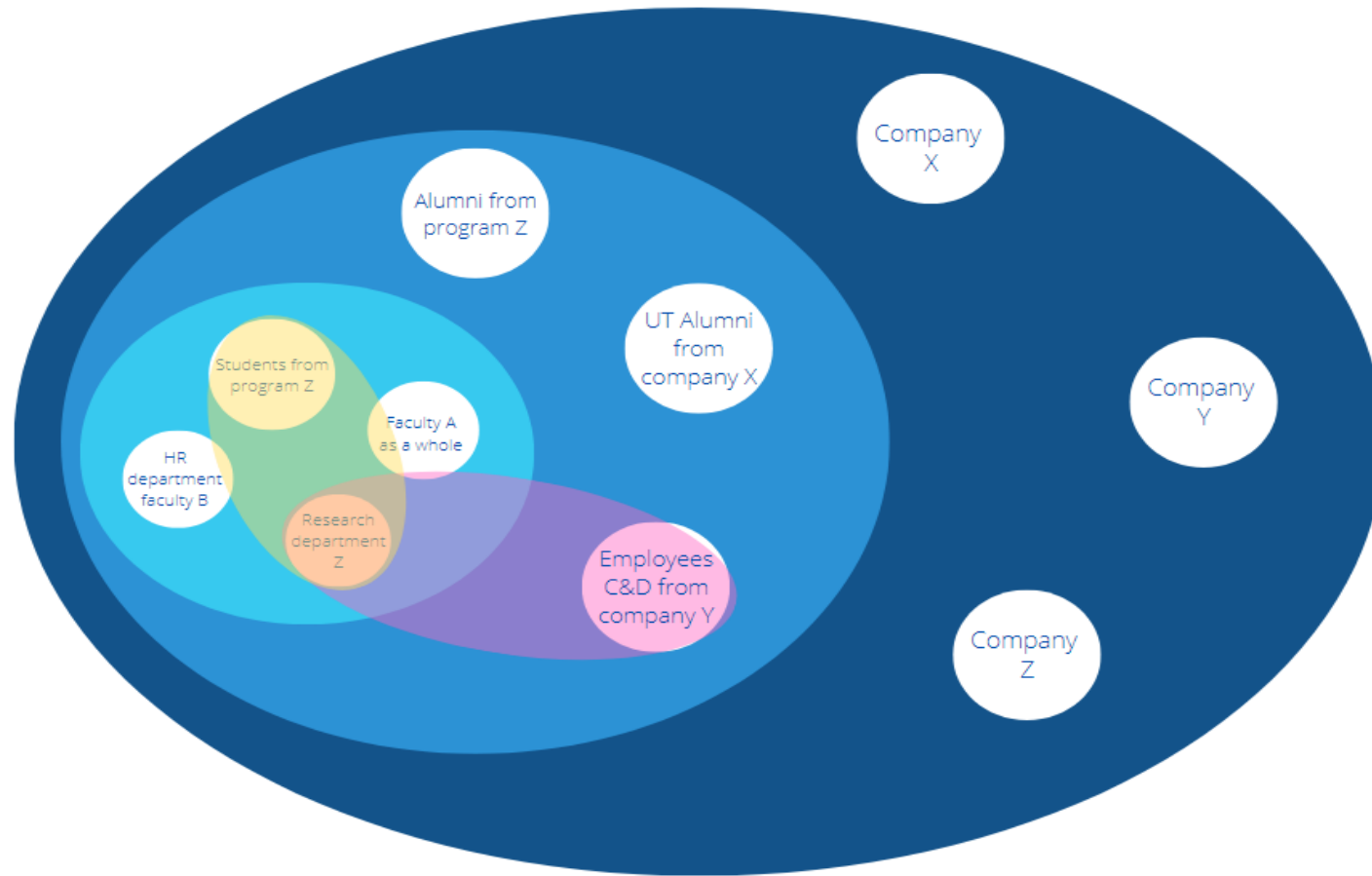
Relational context

Within the relational context there are individuals and groups who share commonalities with actors within the organizational boundaries. Whether these individuals also form a strong community with the actors within the organizational boundaries depends on the degree of relationship.

Strong communities between the organization and relations positively influence:
- pride & ambassadorship
- societal impact
- strong presence outside campus
- quality improvement
- sense of belonging
- long-term relationships with partners

Diagram labels
- Company X
- Alumni from program Z
- UT Alumni from company X
- Company Y
- Students from program Z
- Faculty A as a whole
- HR department faculty B
- Research department Z
- Employees C&D from company Y
- Company Z

Ecosystem

The ecosystem consists of all (possibly) relevant actors in the environment. Over time, actors can shift from one sphere to another through changes in behavior, relationships, and patterns. For example, someone moves from the ecosystem to the relational sphere because he/she spends time on sustainability together with UT employees (Department Z). Over time, the person enters employment within the UT (faculty A) and the community moves to the organizational context. After a while the person stops within the UT and the contact fades, this person slowly shifts back towards the ecosystem.

02. COMMUNITY BUILDING

AS A RESULT OF INTERVIEWS WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION REGARDING CURRENT COMMUNITY (BUILDING) ACTIVITIES, SOME PATTERNS HAVE BECOME VISIBLE. THESE WILL BE EXPLAINED IN THE NEXT SLIDES (PHASE 2). THE TOOLS MENTIONED IN THESE PATTERNS CAN BE USED FOR STRENGTHENING EXISTING COMMUNITIES, BUT ALSO FOR BUILDING NEW COMMUNITIES.

04	**KEY SUCCESS FACTORS**	The key to a strong community is finding both a strong intrinsic connection and extrinsic priority.
05	**BOTTOM-UP VS TOP-DOWN**	Meeting community needs: Bottom-up input, top-down resources.
06	**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**	(Dis)advantages of various channels of communication to reach the community.
07	**ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**	The art of forging personal relationships and building a name

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CONDITIONS FOR A HIGH CHANCE: INTRINSIC DRIVE & EXTRINSIC PRIORITY

Your theme has a strong influence on the strenght of the community

Low chance of strong sense of community ← → high chance of strong sense of community

Teaching innovation
Moderate personal connection
Moderate-low external priority

Sustainability
Moderate-strong personal connection
High-moderate external priority

LGBTQ+
Strong personal connection
High external priority

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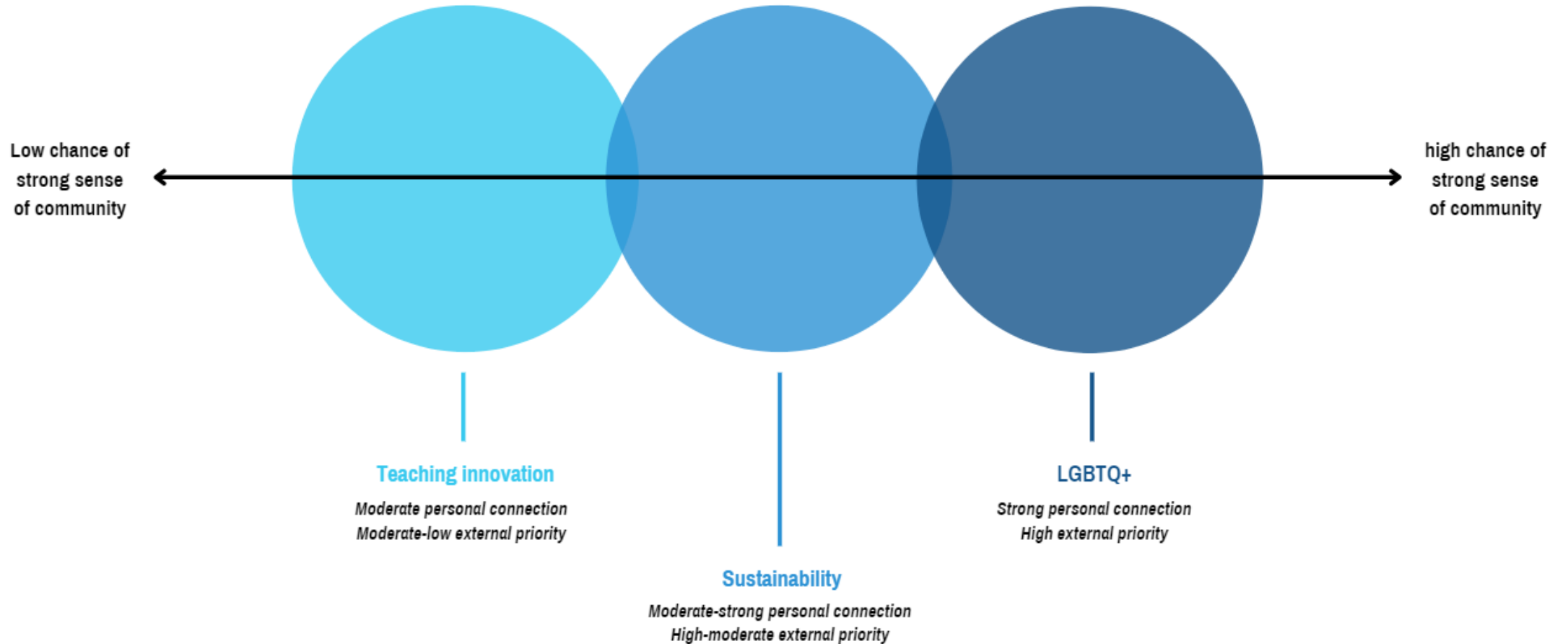
THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPONDING TO NEEDS

When it comes to steering the direction of the community, it will always have to come from the members (bottom-up). There are officially no hierarchical lines in communities and membership is on a voluntary basis, which means that meeting the needs of the community is crucial to maintain support. Without this support, the community will likely not survive. Top-down contributions to the community can be done by helping to fulfil community needs. For example, making resources such as time, money and knowledge available can help organize the community towards achieving their goals.

TOP DOWN

BOTTOM UP

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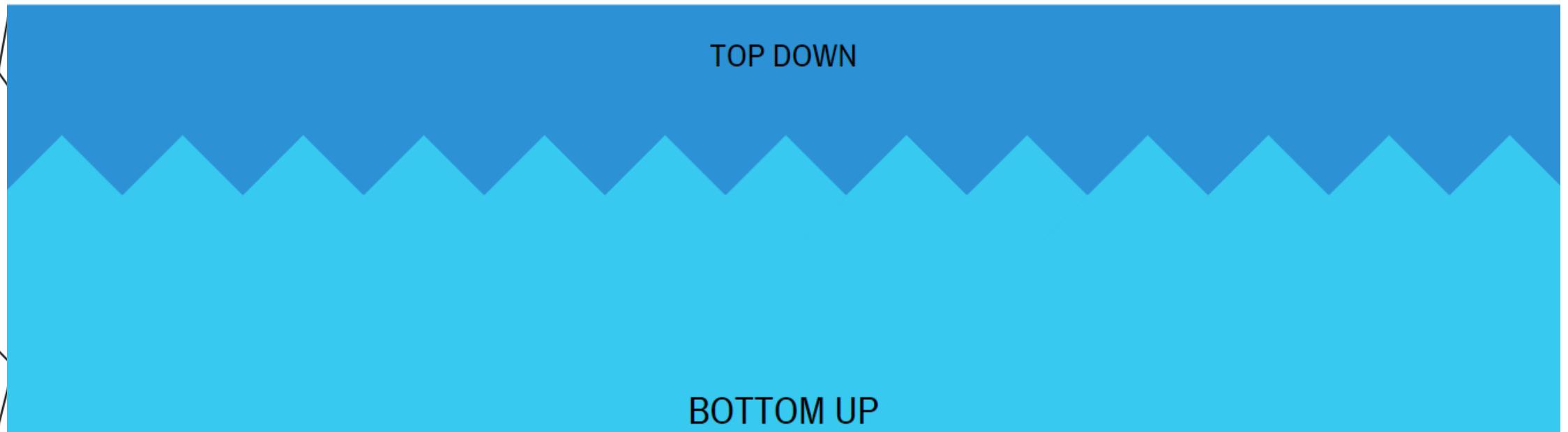
E-COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The most commonly used channels for sending and receiving information are a **website**, **MS Teams** environment, **E-mail** and **Linkedin**. These channels each have their own advantages and disadvantages when it comes to reach, level of interaction and rules.

INTERNET WEBSITE

An open internet page has the advantage that everyone can visit the page and find information regarding your community, the disadvantage is that internet pages are generally not very interactive, which is also often not desirable, given the open nature and lack of privacy.

MICROSOFT TEAMS

The MS Teams environment of the UT has the advantage that it is a medium that every employee has access to and that the environment of your community is only accessible by your pre-accepted members, which ensures more privacy with regard to the website. This privacy also provides a safe space for interaction. The downside is that most employees are already members of a multitude of different Teams-environments, so they can experience over-information, resulting in not being active in the respective Teams-environment.

E-MAIL

The advantage of using email to send and receive information about the community is that it can be very targeted and normally people are likely to see it. However, many employees have an email inbox that has gotten out of hand, which can cause an enormous information overload, resulting in unanswered emails. Next to this, email is especially an interactive medium for individual communication, instead of group discussions.

LINKEDIN PAGE

The advantage of a LinkedIn page is that it is outside the usual channels of the UT and that LinkedIn itself is a platform for connecting professionals based on common interests. The scope of the page is thus very large and may be restricted so that only pre-approved members have access. A possible disadvantage is that not everyone is an active LinkedIn user, which means that interaction on the page can be low.
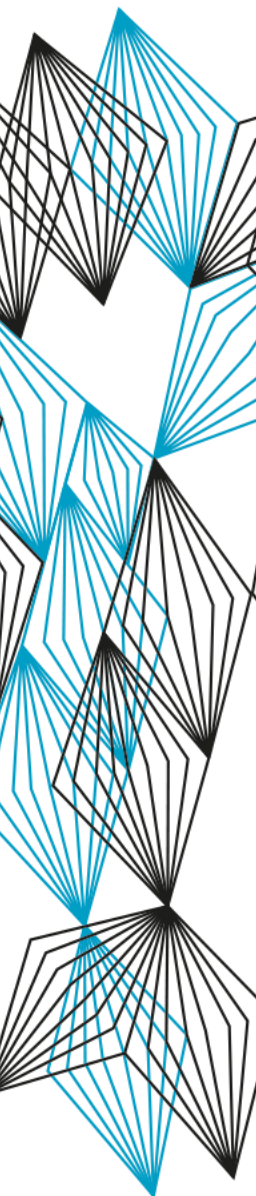
PRIKBORD

'Prikbord' is a communication platform for UT employees on which members can start conversations in an easily-accessible way based on topics of their interest. Everyone can read and respond on started topics, resulting in a diverse audience. The disadvantage is that a closed environment (currently) cannot be set up, meaning that privacy-sensitive information cannot be shared.

SERVICE PORTAL

The Service Portal combines different types of information for employees all in one spot. This includes news, events and other topics (such as sustainability and diversity). Information on the portal falls into two categories: open and closed (login required). This combination makes it possible to make a general part of information available for everyone, while more sensitive data is visible within a protected environment (UT employees). The disadvantage of this is that it is visible to the entire UT, instead of only chosen individuals.

ENGAGE, GROW & SUSTAIN

In addition to the thematic conditions for a great chance of a strong community and the (digital) channels to reach (potential) members, a strong and long-lasting community also masters the art of **creating and strengthening mutual social relationships**. We call these '**engagement activities**'.

Events

Organizing meetings/activities is a very important means to ensure the continuity and strenght of the community and to keep members motivated and engaged. The moments when like-minded people come together serve as an ideal situation to exchange ideas, formulate a vision together and thus create and strengthen a personal bond with each other.

Storytelling

Storytelling is telling credible stories that are relevant to the target group and that ensure that there is a connection between events. These stories ensure that the target group understands (complex) information, remembers the information and creates an emotional bond

Friendraising

The concept of friend-raising involves an community establishing meaningful, genuine, and high-quality relationships with other people inside or outside the group. The friendships that are established are purely authentic and grounded in common vision and values. The purpose of the relationship is to add value to the community, this could be financial, but also by providing knowledge, access to a network, etc.

Floorwalking

Floor Walking is a method where an experienced community member will spend time at certain locations and literally Walks the Floor responding to individual queries, problems, tasks and community-related issues from (potential) members of the community.

Ambassadors

An ambassador represents the community or a certain part within it to the outside world. This person has a promotional role and ideally should therefore be a person of prestige or notoriety, in order to bind others to themselves (and the community).

Branding

Branding stands for the image of a brand, in this case the community, the feeling it evokes in the public and the image people have in mind of the community. Branding is not the sum of everything that happens within the community, but the sum of how other people perceive what is happening.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY BUILDING

(CLICK ON THE LINKS)
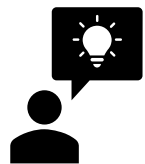
DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY PITCH

EVENT PLANNING

STORY TELLING / IMPACT STORY

IMPACT EVALUATION

REPORTING

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE EVENTS

ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

ORGANIZING A PEER ASSIST

ORGANIZING A FISHBOWL

ORGANIZING AN E-DEBATE

FOR THE FULL COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE TOOLKIT, CLICK HERE

HOW TO START?
STARTERKIT (CDC)

MORE ON EVENTS?
EVENT CANVAS
(THE CANVAS REVOLUTION)

MORE ON GOALS AND STRATEGIES?
FORMAT (DSI)

SHORT "TED TALK" ON COMMUNITY BUILDING

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M&C – Annual Plan 2022

Starterskit Community Building (Career Development Centre)