

Growing Your Online Community

There's more to audience building than posting on social media. Here are 3 ways to grow your online community, while improving your SEO at the same time!



Get a free SparkToro account to find out where your audience hangs out

SparkToro is a great 'audience research' tool. Attach yourself to the larger audience of other brands by finding out where else your ideal customers and guests hang out online.

1. Sign up for free at <https://sparktoro.com>.
2. Use their search prompts:
 - Hashtags and word common in profiles
 - Social accounts they follow (free version), podcasts, Youtube channels and media outlets (paid version)
 - Pay special attention to "Hidden Gems" results (not as popular accounts that might be more accessible)
 - Use the "Is Located In" filter to drill down (might have smaller data sample)
3. Follow all relevant social accounts and hashtags (clicking the social icon in results takes you right to the profile!).
4. Sign up for those accounts newsletter, major events, listen to podcast episodes, etc.
5. Engage with their content, share it on your own social and email platforms. Spend 2-3 months analyzing their audience and content. The point is to learn what resonates with people and find opportunities for you to connect directly with the brand for collaboration.



Build backlinks to your site while collaborating with those already familiar with your brand

Backlinks are when other websites link back to yours. They allow users to come from a relevant site to you and are thus a warmer lead. Also, the more backlinks from relevant sites you have, the more 'authority' your site is given. This is important in SEO because search bots can't rely on your content alone for context. They need other similar sites to 'vouch' you are indeed legit.

But we're not building back links just for the sake of it. This sort of outreach is also an excellent way to collaborate with other companies and organizations in your field.

1. Contact past customers, colleagues and suppliers who may benefit from linking back to your site. Especially if you have a great resource or industry insider knowledge you think their audience should know about.
2. Reach out and collaborate with any organizations and associations you belong to. You're making their life easier by adding content to their existing marketing, AND they're supposed to support you as a member so the ask should be easy. You could pitch:
 - Roundup posts with other members covering a specific topic
 - Free lunch and learn webinar/seminar to showcase your expertise
 - Get featured in their newsletter or forum, etc via a lead magnet or free tool you've created



Present to audiences in ways beyond websites

Use the research you gathered from SparkToro to approach new-to-you brands and creators with niche followings that fit perfectly with your business goals. Note that for every 10 brands you reach out to, 1 may result in success. One well-matched appearance is all it takes to turn someone else's fans into yours as well. Be sure your pitch evokes curiosity and shows you will respect the access to their audience by offering huge value:

- Appear on their podcast
- Write a guest newsletter spot
- Give a short talk at their Zoom meeting

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