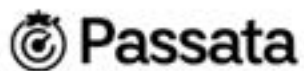


People power: How communities build the brands of tomorrow

Olivia Mae Hanlon & Gaby Mendes





Hi, I'm Olivia

Founder and CEO of Girls in Marketing
Co-Founder and CMO of Passata

I'm an entrepreneur, public speaker, and community builder who's passionate about helping people navigate the working world from marketing to leadership, and productivity.



Hi, I'm Gaby

Co-Founder and CEO of Passata
Founder of Talk Twenties

I'm a presenter, speaker, and entrepreneur passionate about helping people build their dream life with more clarity and confidence. I love building tools, brands, and conversations that empower people to thrive.

We met as founders in 2020
and bonded **instantly**



Girls in Marketing started as a simple concept

with a mission to make marketing education accessible, inclusive and empowering.

2019

**A website and
Instagram page**



2025

**A global learning
platform, community
and movement**

*Girls in
Marketing*

Our impact at a glance

*Girls in
Marketing*

20M+

social media
impressions in 12
months



500K+

social community
members across
platforms



250K+

podcast
downloads



60+

global and local
corporate
partners



Talk Twenties was born

with a mission to help bridge the gap between
school/university and adult life.

2020

**A podcast I started in
my spare bedroom
on zoom**



2024

**A media company and
festival that reached
millions every month**



Our impact at a glance

27M+

social media
impressions in 12
months



600K+

podcast
downloads



100K+

social community
members across
platforms



200+

guests and
interviewees





and community was key to
both of our growth!

What we mean by 'community'?

Referral rewards

Surprise gifts or mailers

Product design voting

AMAs with the founders or team

Featured profiles (on socials or email)

IRL merchandise

Values or purpose alignment

Peer-peer support threads

Fitness clubs (run clubs, hike days, yoga)

Community meetups

Loyalty programs

Shared challenges (e.g. 30-day goals)

Inside jokes or language

Retreats or wellness weekends

Early access to product drops

IRL pop-ups

Secret sales or discount codes

Member priority benefits

Brand-hosted dinners or brunches

"A community is not the people
who follow you.
It's the people who would miss you
if you disappeared"

Community is our foundation, not just a feature



How we foster community:

Peer-led learning,
membership and
programmes

Safe spaces for
questions &
vulnerability

Real-time connection
through Slack,
events and feedback
loops

Community is all about *belonging*

How we fostered community:



Interactive events
that centre lived
experience

Creator-led content
that reflects shared
challenges

Open dialogue
across platforms
about taboo subjects

Other brands doing this well

These brands haven't just created products. They created belonging. People don't just buy from them. They identify with them.



Runna: Built around shared identity and goal-setting (running community + WhatsApp groups + reward loops)



Refy: From beauty brand to beauty club – exclusive content, styling tips, offline meetups



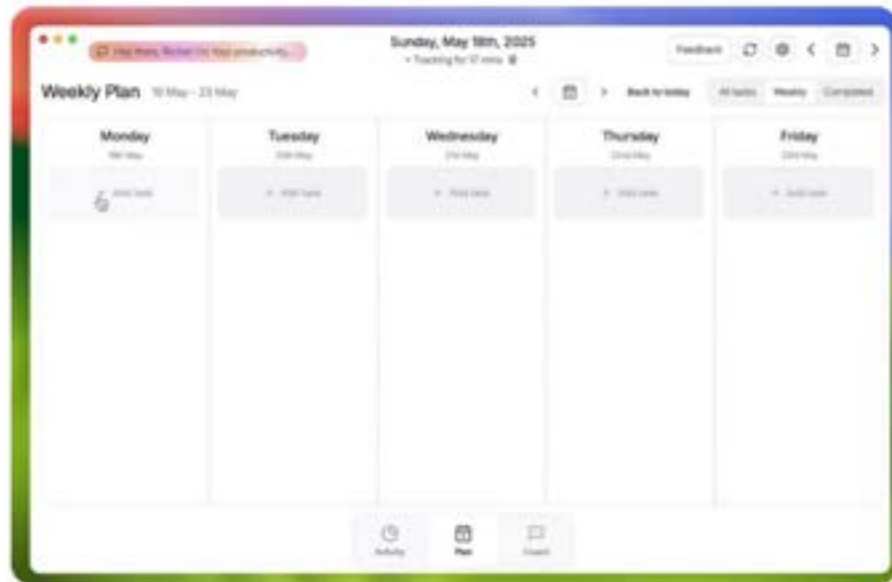
Patagonia: Unafraid to align with environmental activism. Community stems from its outspoken social mission and transparency.

Our approach with Passata

The AI productivity coach for people with goals bigger than their to-do list.

Passata uses AI to **understand how you work, automatically tracking your time** and turning that into **personalised coaching and daily systems** that support your goals.

Check it out: passata.io



Our approach with Passata

Alongside the tool we're building, we're also building communities that compliment our values and mission.

How?

- Micro-communities around identity (starting with Her Productive Era - a community redefining productivity for women who want both success and balance)



- Supportive spaces for focus, accountability and real-life work talk

What does our experience show?

Community matters. FACT.

76% of consumers say they are more likely to buy from a brand they feel connected to

(Sprout Social, 2023)

64% of consumers want brands to connect with them beyond products

(Edelman Trust Barometer, 2022)

Online communities can increase customer lifetime value by up to 19%

(CMX Research, 2022)

So if community matters **THAT** much...
*why are we only using it at the end of the
journey?*



It's time to rethink the funnel

Traditional marketing sees the journey as:



But in reality, customers move back and forth

And community can support them at every point, not just the end

It's time to rethink the funnel



Awareness

Community sparks curiosity

- Word-of-mouth and social sharing from members = organic reach
- Events, content, and user stories make people feel something before they know your product
- Seeing others believe in you builds instant credibility

Example: Someone discovers a brand because of a podcast guest or TikTok comment.

Awareness



Glossier

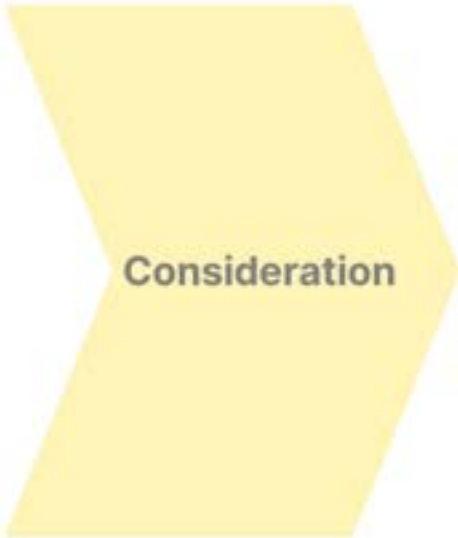


Gymshark



Notion

It's time to rethink the funnel



Consideration

Trust is built through belonging

- People ask real users for advice in community spaces
- Community content (forums, testimonials, peer discussions) eases doubts
- Feels less like a sales pitch, more like a recommendation from a friend

Example: Someone considering a product scrolls through a community thread of people sharing their experiences. One person posts, "I felt nervous too, but here's how it helped" and that's what tips their decision.

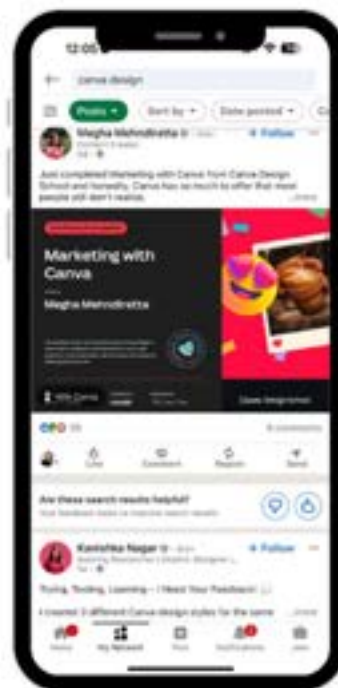
Consideration



Runna



Fenty Beauty



Canva

It's time to rethink the funnel



Purchase

Community converts (without the pressure)

- Access to insider perks, early access, or “member-only” products can drive decision-making
- Community signals FOMO or exclusivity – “I want to be part of this”
- It feels like joining, not just buying

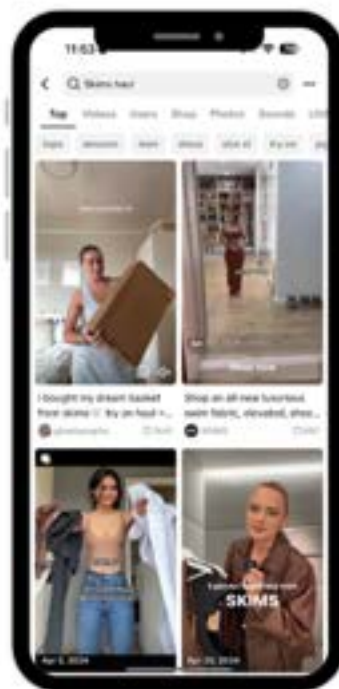
Example: *Someone is on the fence, then sees a “new member welcome” post or a live Q&A in the community and thinks, I want to be part of that.*



Purchase



Soho House



Skims



Function of Beauty

It's time to rethink the funnel



Retention

The best way to keep customers is to make them feel seen

- Ongoing support through community = lower churn
- Encourages product feedback and deeper usage
- Celebrates wins, milestones, and success stories

Example: *Someone who just signed up joins a weekly accountability thread. They check in, get replies from others, and start showing up more. They stay for the people.*



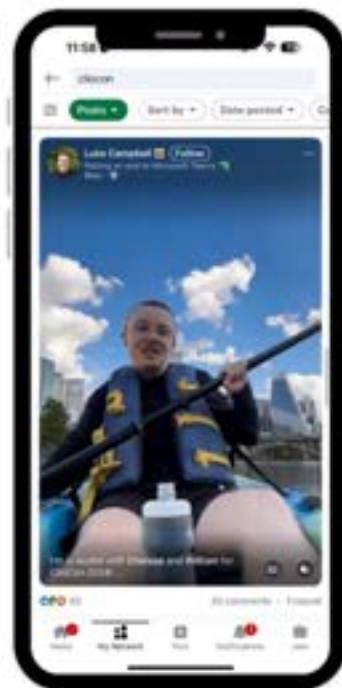
Retention



Peloton




Headspace



Clio

It's time to rethink the funnel



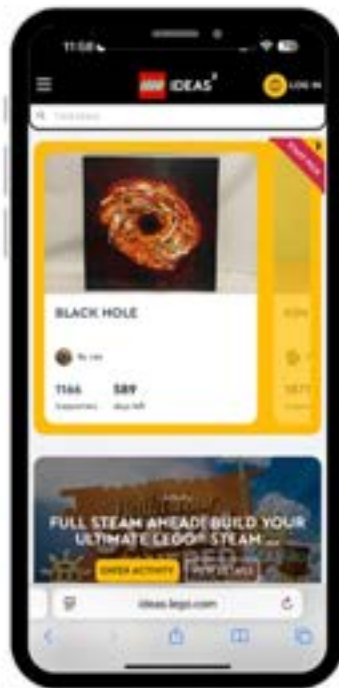
Advocacy

Community = your most powerful marketing strategy

- Members create UGC, leave reviews, host meetups, refer friends
- They defend your brand when things go wrong
- Advocacy becomes effortless when people genuinely care

Example: *Someone shares a photo of their setup or a screenshot of progress, tags the brand, and writes "This changed the game for me."*

Advocacy



LEGO



TALA



OLIPOP

Community isn't a single channel.

It's the heart and soul of your brand.



Key takeaways



Community creates connection where campaigns can't

The brands people remember are the ones they felt part of and love

Start building it before you think you need it

People are tired of being marketed at.
They want to feel part of something.

Come and
say hi! 🙌

