



Reach3



RIVAL GROUP COMPANIES

Insight Community: Best Practices and Benchmarks to Maximize Your ROI

The screenshot displays the Reach3 RIVAL Insight Community interface. On the left, a smartphone shows a chat conversation with a woman's video feed. The chat messages are:

- "I'm in - let's try a video"
- "Fantastic! We'd love to hear directly from you about your experience."
- "Thanks for sharing, that's helpful."

The main interface shows a navigation bar with "CHATS", "PARTICIPANTS", "DATA", and "SETTINGS". The "CHATS" tab is active, showing "All chats / Research" and a "Published" status. A "CLOSE DISTRIBUTIONS" button is visible. Below the navigation bar, a "Summary" section displays four metrics:

- 375 (orange)
- 140 (blue)
- 80 (pink)
- 1,290 (green)

Below the summary, an "Invitations" table is shown with columns for Name, Status, Steps, Entered, Incomplete, Disqualified, Completed, and Actions. The table lists two invitations:

Name	Status	Steps	Entered	Incomplete	Disqualified	Completed	Actions
Invitation - Main Launch	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none">OPENED: 2021-07-19 / 9:00 AM (PST)DELIVERED: 1495 / 1495 participantsCLOSE NOW	95	100	50	1250	...
Invitation name	Pending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">OPEN MANUALLYTARGET: ~50 participantsCLOSE MANUALLY	-	-	-	-	...
Total			-	-	-	-	

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Introduction

Today's fast-changing world means brands can't rely on outdated data to keep up with customers. Consumer preferences shift quickly, and competition is fierce. Staying relevant takes more than occasional surveys or pricey focus groups. That's why insight communities matter—they keep brands in a real-time conversation with their customers.



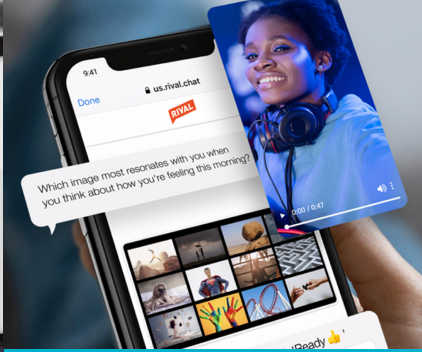
Think of insight communities as a bridge between your brand and your most relevant audiences. Communities help you get honest feedback, build trust, and demonstrate to your customers that you genuinely listen. Unlike one-off surveys, these communities let you ask follow-up questions, explore motivations deeper, and test ideas with a group already invested in sharing their perspective. The result? Better insights and stronger customer relationships over time.

For today's brands, insight communities aren't just tools—they're an investment to better business decisions. They bring together engaged customers who help shape products, refine services, and improve experiences.

If you already have a community, this guide will show you how to design, manage, and optimize it to drive impact. If you don't have an insight community yet, you'll pick up some tips here as well on how to better engage your customers. Whether you want to boost engagement, streamline recruitment, or get faster insights, there's something here for researchers.

Insight Communities: A Brief History

Over the past two decades, insight communities have evolved significantly as technology advanced and consumer behaviors shifted.

		
Early 2000s	Mid-2000s	2020s and Beyond
<p>Insight communities started as “panels”—static groups of respondents who answered surveys occasionally. These early panels provided useful data but lacked the depth and flexibility needed for ongoing, real-time insights.</p>	<p>New platforms introduced more structured insight communities, allowing brands to build sustained relationships with customers and gather continuous feedback. This was a turning point from one-off surveys to ongoing conversations.</p>	<p>With mobile technology and social media on the rise, insight communities became more dynamic and interactive. This evolution transformed communities from simple data collection tools into spaces for authentic dialogue and relationship-building.</p>

Despite these advances, traditional insight community platforms can still fall short:

- Slow setup and outdated email recruitment can struggle to capture interest.
- Impersonal interfaces and uninspired interactions lead to low engagement.
- Heavy reliance on recall-based surveys misses out on in-the-moment feedback.
- Complex user interfaces make managing these communities cumbersome.

Why Companies Need Insight Communities Today

With customer preferences and technologies evolving quickly, brands today need a more efficient, impactful approach to customer insights. Modern insight communities offer a solution by delivering:



Real-Time, Actionable Insights: Access an engaged group for both long-term strategic insights and quick, tactical feedback—perfect for fast-paced decision-making.



Increased Engagement & Loyalty: Engaging participants over time turns them into invested stakeholders, providing brands with richer, more relevant insights.



Cost Efficiency: Unlike traditional methods, insight communities reduce recruitment costs and allow for iterative research, building on previously collected data and creating an efficient, scalable approach.



Flexibility & Agility: Built for a digital-first world, today's insight communities help brands track trends in real-time and adapt to customer needs as they happen.



High-Quality, Continuous Data: Ongoing engagement with communities yields deeper insights that support better, more connected decisions.

In today's data-driven landscape, insight communities are essential for brands aiming to stay responsive, competitive, and deeply connected to their customers.

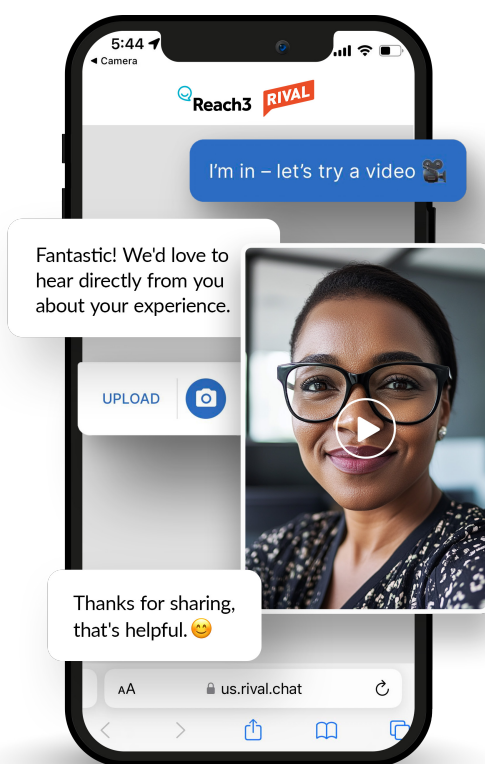
Building Effective Insight Communities: Modern Best Practices

The drawbacks of traditional communities inspired us at Rival Technologies and Reach3 to create a new solution called **Community 2.0**.

This approach is engineered to double your engagement, speed, and impact by letting you do the following:

1. Go Mobile-First to Meet People Where They Are

With **6.84 billion smartphones** worldwide, mobile is no longer optional—it's essential to engaging modern consumers.



Today, people live on their phones, which makes mobile the perfect way to connect in real-time. With SMS-based invitations and interactions, Community 2.0 offers:

- **Real-time responses:** Capture feedback instantly, avoiding the delays that come with email.
- **Micro-moment engagement:** Let participants respond during everyday moments, like commuting or waiting in line.

By using SMS, you ensure high visibility, seamless access, and a more responsive community.

2. Keep It Natural and Authentic with Conversational Research

Forget the clunky survey interface. Community 2.0 uses a **conversational survey format** that looks and feels like a chat, similar to messaging apps like WhatsApp or iMessage. This approach:

- **Lowers barriers to entry:** Community members are not required to use yet another app or to remember a password to a portal.
- **Feels natural and familiar:** People answer questions in a chat-like format, boosting comfort and openness.
- **Encourages richer responses:** Chat-based surveys feel approachable, helping you get more thoughtful feedback.

Participants engage more when the process is easy and feels like a natural conversation.

“Today, people live on their phones, which makes mobile the perfect way to **connect in real-time.**”



3. Blend Methods for Deeper, Dynamic Insights

Today's consumers are complex, so it takes more than just numbers to understand them. Community 2.0 blends **quantitative and qualitative** methods, allowing participants to respond with:

- **Video, photos, and text:** Get rich multimedia responses for deeper insights.
- **Real-time product testing:** Gather feedback on products as participants use them.
- **In-the-moment reactions:** Capture authentic, immediate responses.

Participants engage more when the process is easy and feels like a natural conversation.

4. Drive Engagement with a Simple, Participant-Centric Design

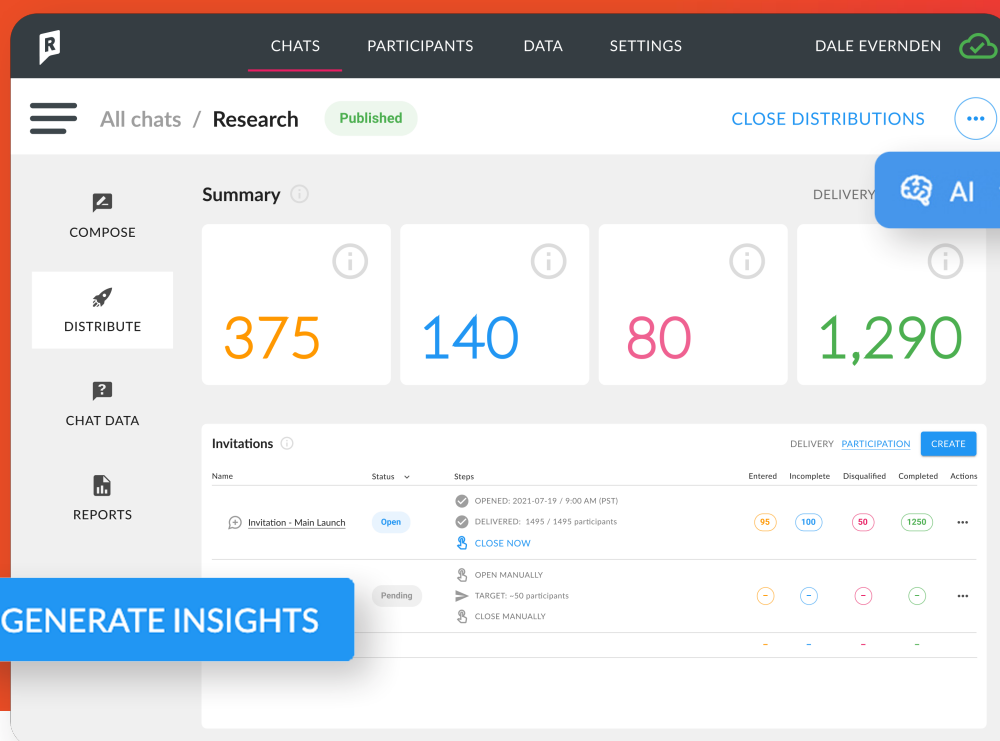
Engagement is key. Community 2.0 puts participants first by prioritizing simplicity:

- **Easy participation:** Skip the passwords; SMS invites make it quick and easy to join.
- **Low-friction experience:** Fewer steps mean higher response rates and less survey fatigue.

This streamlined, participant-centered approach not only encourages ongoing engagement but also makes community management easier. High response rates create an efficient, cost-effective community with a dedicated, enthusiastic group delivering valuable insights.

By focusing on mobile access, conversational engagement, multimedia flexibility, and user-friendly design, **Community 2.0** empowers brands to build a thriving insight community that keeps pace with today's fast-moving market.





Does Community 2.0 Deliver?

We wanted to know if Community 2.0 delivers the results researchers, marketers and business leaders demand today. So, we ran a research-on-research study, gathering insights from 16 established B2C communities in North America.

Here's what we found:

Broad and Diverse Reach: With 39,501 participants and 584 conversational surveys conducted over a year, we saw engagement across all age groups and backgrounds. SMS-based invites made participation easy and accessible, and the request for a mobile number didn't slow down join rates—66% on average—right in line with SMS marketing standards.

Higher Engagement Through SMS: Concerns about SMS requests hurting participation turned out to be unfounded. SMS invitations reached people directly and quickly, tapping into the mobile-first behavior people are used to today.

Strong Response Rates: Community 2.0 drove response rates that far surpassed traditional survey methods. We saw:

- Average response rates of 40% (some communities reached 50-60%),
- Completion rates around 85%, meaning participants didn't just start—they stayed engaged to the end.

“Community 2.0's mobile-first, conversational approach consistently keeps participants **engaged, delivering better results for brands.**”

Outperforming Email-Based Surveys: Traditional surveys, especially email-based, struggle to hit high engagement rates, often averaging around 10-15%. Community 2.0's mobile-first, conversational approach consistently keeps participants engaged, delivering better results for brands.

The findings show that Community 2.0's approach—using mobile, conversational methods, and participant-centered design—meets the needs of today's fast-paced research landscape, creating a more engaged, responsive community.

Insight Community Benchmarks

Wondering if you're getting the most out of your insight community? Here are some benchmarks based on our research-on-research study.

ENGAGEMENT

Over
40%
Response rates

86%
Completion rate

ENGAGEMENT

66%
Join rate (across
all demographics)

Join rates by **age**:

18 to 24: 37%	45 to 54: 84%
25 to 34: 52%	55 to 64: 78%
35 to 44: 71%	65+: 67%

SPEED TO INSIGHTS

40%
Of participants complete
surveys within 1 hour

4 min 18 sec
Median time to
complete (LOI)

Theory in Action: 3 Real-World Case Studies

CPG/Snacking Brand:

This brand's insight community has been engaging members in product testing for over five years, achieving an impressive **94% active response rate**. By giving members hands-on experiences and involving them in product development, the brand builds loyalty and fosters candid feedback. Community members feel like true partners, helping drive product innovation and creating ever-stronger insights over time.

Media Company:

This media brand's insight community is all about listening closely to the Black community's evolving needs. Using a conversational approach, they consistently achieve a **50% response rate**—well above industry averages. By sharing results and keeping feedback loops open, they've built a sense of trust and inclusivity, empowering community members to shape relevant content and advertising.

Large Beverage Company:

Low response rates on a traditional platform limited this brand's insights. Switching to a mobile-friendly, interactive community changed everything, boosting engagement to **66%**. Personalized video messages from the team, along with engaging incentives, created a welcoming atmosphere. The result? Higher-quality insights from a community that feels truly connected to the brand's diverse portfolio.

Key Tips to a Healthy, Impactful Insight Community

Based on our research-on-research and the performance of top communities on the Rival platform, we recommend the following best practices.

Recruit Wisely: Connect on Their Terms

- **Meet people where they are.** Reach potential members through the channels they already use, like social media, SMS, and in-app notifications. Make joining a breeze with no-login-required options, like a quick swipe-up on Instagram or a simple SMS opt-in.
- **Verify with SMS.** SMS-based recruitment adds an extra layer of security, making it tougher for bots or fake profiles to join. It keeps your community real and your data reliable.

Maximize Engagement: Easy, Mobile, and Accessible

Prioritize mobile-friendly interactions. SMS prompts get responses fast—up to 40% of replies often come within the first hour! Mobile-first design makes it easy for participants to share photos, videos, and responses on the go.



AI-powered tone adjustment helps questions sound **conversational** and **aligned to your brand.**



Make surveys feel natural. AI-powered tone adjustment helps questions sound conversational and aligned to your brand, while profile variables eliminate repetitive questions, keeping surveys relevant and quick.

Surprise and delight. Thoughtful, on-brand questions delivered through SMS can create engaging “wow” moments, encouraging people to stay active in your community.

Optimize Your Surveys: Keep them Short and Sweet

- **Cut out repetitive questions.** Use profile variables to collect demographic details once, not every time. This instantly shortens surveys, saving participants’ time.
- **Send at the right moment.** Time your surveys to reach people in their local time zone for higher response rates.
- **Break up long surveys.** For bigger projects, try sending shorter surveys consecutively over a few days to keep engagement up without overwhelming respondents.

Accelerate: Capture Insights in Real Time

- **Capture both depth and breadth.** Use a platform that combines qualitative and quantitative tools. That way, you can get open-ended responses, photos, or videos alongside survey answers—all in one go.
- **Let AI do the heavy lifting.** AI-driven tools for theme detection and sentiment analysis speed up analysis by quickly uncovering patterns in text and video. This lets you focus on fine-tuning and interpreting the data without being bogged down by manual tasks.

Putting It All Together

In a fast-changing world, the need for insight communities has never been clearer. To keep up with shifting customer preferences and evolving market trends, brands need more than just data—they need a real, ongoing connection with their audience. Insight communities provide exactly that, creating a direct line to engaged customers who are ready to share feedback, offer new ideas, and help shape the brand's future.

By embracing strategies like mobile-first design, participant-friendly interfaces, and AI-powered analysis, you can build an insight community that goes beyond gathering data. These best practices ensure your community is responsive, high-impact, and a meaningful part of your brand's journey. In doing so, you don't just get more accurate and actionable insights—you also strengthen your relationship with customers, making them feel like valued partners every step of the way.



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**Want a deeper dive
into Community 2.0?**

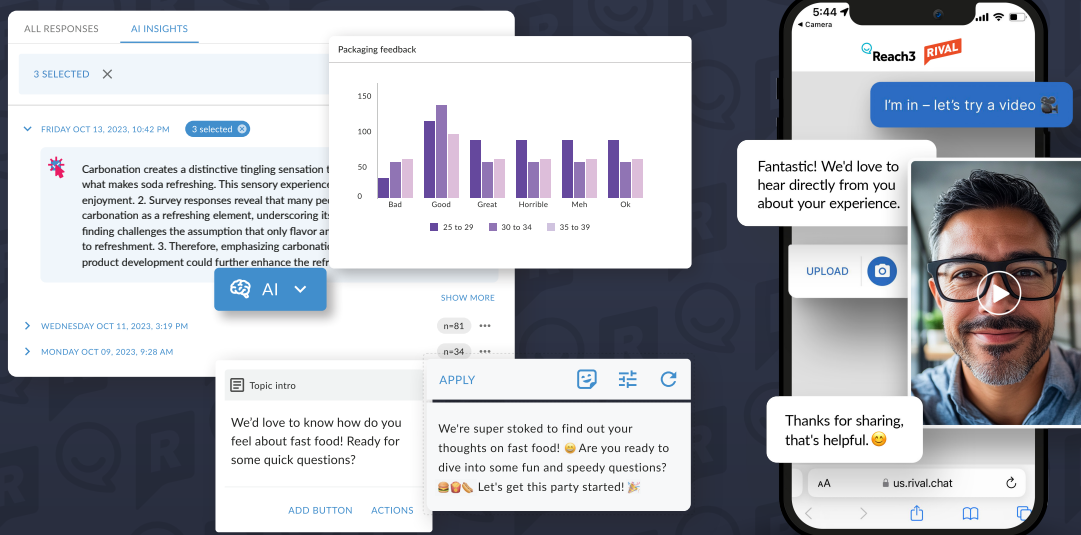
Talk to one of our experts.

reach3insights.com

rivaltech.com

Community 2.0

Insight Communities Reimagined,
Powered by Conversation and AI



ENGAGEMENT

87%

Completion
rate

DEPTH

7x

Words with
video responses

SPEED

40%

Completes in
under an hour

RESULTS



Business
outcomes

Increase engagement and get closer to your customers
using an agile, conversational research platform

reach3insights.com/community-2.0

rivaltech.com/community



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