



*Swarmteams® White Paper – February 2008*  
**Guide to Community Engagement Marketing**

This paper outlines how marketers can use *Swarms* to interact with consumers within their trusted groups and communities in a way which results in higher responses and greater engagement at a much lower cost than traditional marketing campaigns.

Copyright Swarmteams® 2008  
[www.swarmteams.com](http://www.swarmteams.com)

## 1. Community Engagement versus Consumer Interruption

According to *wikipedia*, “*Engagement Marketing* (aka “participation marketing”) is a marketing strategy that invites and encourages consumers to participate in the evolution of a brand. Rather than looking at consumers as passive receivers of messages, engagement marketers believe that consumers should be actively involved in the production and co-creation of marketing programs.”

Engagement marketing is often contrasted with other marketing approaches where the marketer dictates the timing of the consumer interaction – so-called “Interruption Marketing.” The main benefits of Engagement Marketing include:

- Higher levels of participation
- Consumers feel more in control
- Better dynamics for trusted recommendations

Also according to *wikipedia*, “*Community Marketing* is a strategy to engage an audience in an active, non-intrusive prospect and customer conversation. Whereas marketing communication strategies such as advertising, promotion, PR, and sales all focus on attaining customers, Community Marketing focuses on the needs of existing customers.”

The concept of community marketing has been advocated in recent books such as “*Communities Dominate Brands*” by *Tomi Ahonen* and *Alan Moore*, which argue that today communities are acting as “filters” between brands and their consumers/customers. If a brand does not recognise this it will waste marketing effort in a style of interaction which may ultimately be destructive and counter-productive. The main benefits of Community Marketing include:

- Engaging a whole community not just an individual consumer
- The community is an automatic free self-propagation mechanism for the *right* messages
- A natural fit with “word of mouth” marketing

Many brands are experimenting with engagement and community marketing; many are also experimenting with Mobile and SMS marketing. This paper outlines how Swarmteams can be used to exploit the *combined advantages* of each of these marketing styles.

## 2. Swarmteams® - the Community Engagement Tool inspired by nature.

One of the biggest challenges/opportunities for marketers is not just to engage consumers but to go beyond this and turn these individuals and their trusted networks into *ambassadors* and *advocates* of the marketer’s brand, media, cause, or community. *Swarmteams®* is a multichannel engagement marketing tool designed on biological principles to increase the results from marketing campaigns. It is particularly attractive for community/ engagement marketing because it supports mobile communities and combines both centralised broadcast and distributed (peer to peer) messaging. *Swarmteams* uniquely integrates both text messaging and instant messaging into “smart messaging” which means a sender can send a message to a whole group without worrying about how each group member will receive it – they each get it the way that suits them best. *Swarmteams* reaches any mobile phone globally which supports text messaging (no downloads required) and the *Swarmteams* web component runs on any browser (no software installations required).

### 3. Swarmteams offers three unique strategies for marketers

#### *Strategy#1. Reaching a community through its Alpha Swarmers*

Swarmteams allows a brand to reach its community through its best connected and most enthusiastic members by creating a network of *Closed Swarms* (Invitation Only). The first benefit of this *alpha swarmer* strategy is much higher response rates as the members of the community are being engaged by people they know and respect (not by remote and impersonal marketers). The second benefit is a much lower cost and effort on campaigns as the brand only has to concentrate on 5-10% of the community. If this 5-10% of the community is looked after really well by the brand then these alpha swarmers will engage the remaining 90-95% on the brand's behalf. This strategy is particularly apt if the brand know their top consumers/customers or where these are not yet known but the particular brand/product lends itself to user champions/ambassadors. For more details on this approach checkout the video on [www.swarmteams.com](http://www.swarmteams.com).

#### *Strategy#2. Creating a new community from Scratch*

In this strategy the brand reaches out directly to its target community by setting up a network of *Open Swarms* which users can join in a single message from the web, mobile phone or email. The brand places the open swarms on their existing web sites and complements this by promoting the swarm names in the media (e.g. local radio or print media) and/or placing the swarm names and joining instructions on product packaging/billboards. The main benefit of this "direct reach" strategy is that it enables the brand to reach a potentially huge audience at very low-cost in a way that is highly convenient for today's mobile consumers to sign-up. This strategy is appropriate where the brand may not know their top consumers or their product does not naturally attract "brand ambassadors".

#### *Strategy#3. Hybrid Open and Closed Swarms*

In many cases strategies#1 and #2 can actually be used in concert in a very powerful way. *Strategy#1* is used to engage the community through "alpha fans" who invite as many other fans as they know to join each of their closed (invite-only) swarms. In parallel with this *Strategy#2* is used to directly reach new fans/consumers through open swarms. New fans recruited through the open swarms are then immediately connected into the existing closed swarm network to ensure that they are integrated and looked after within the swarm community by the alpha swarmers. In this case the alpha swarmers can either be brand ambassadors or marketers working on behalf of the brand or a combination of the two.

### 4. A Swarmteams Engagement Marketing Use Case

In this section we summarise a real example of *Strategy#3* where a music band (*Kharna45*) promote the launch of a new single (download) to their fans using Swarms community engagement marketing. The approach described here applies equally well to product consumers.

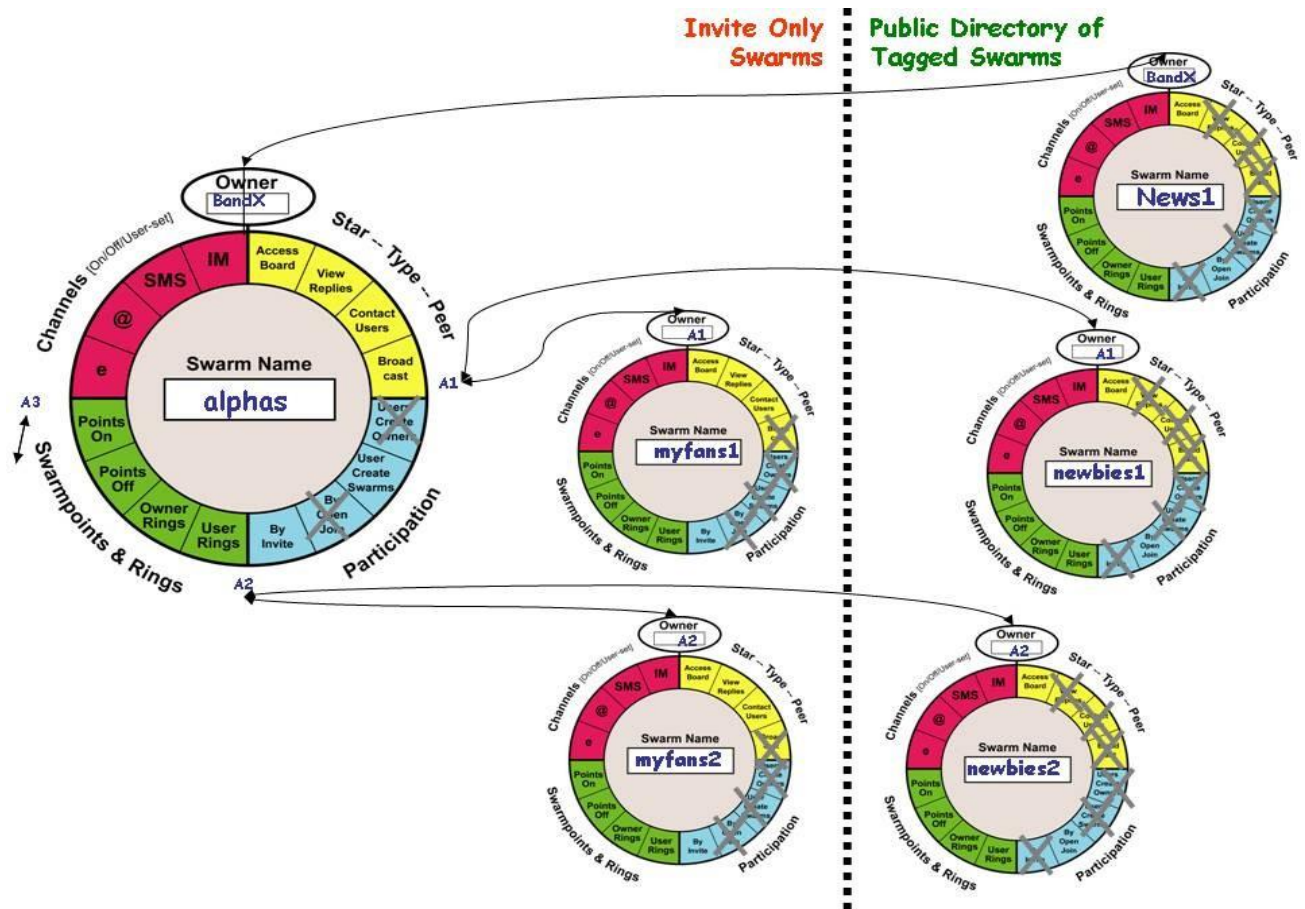
#### *STEP 1: Setting the Swarm Objectives*

In this case to:

1. Build up a cadre of alpha fans to join a VIP Swarm
2. Connect up existing fans who are already known to the alpha fans
3. Make contact with new fans (outside the alpha fan network)
4. Once the swarm community reaches critical mass (1000) have at least 25% of these fans clicking through (from web or mobile phone) on a swarm message to purchase the band's new single
5. At least 50% of the fans remain active (replying to messages) in the swarms one month after the new single launch.

**STEP 2: Designing the Swarm Community**

The diagram below shows a fragment of the band’s Swarm Community – a combination of *Closed Swarms* (on the left) and *Open Swarms* (on the right).



Top left shows a swarm of VIP Fans (“alphas”) for the top fans of the band. These *alpha fans* are allowed to create their own swarms. Each alpha fan has two swarms – a closed swarm which is invite only (e.g. “myfans1”) and an open swarm (e.g. “newbies1”) which they promote on their blogs and social network pages and which anyone can join in a single message. The swarm community also has a band-level open swarm (“News1”) to allow fans to join up from the band’s main website and *Facebook* and *Myspace* pages.

**STEP 3: Engaging the alpha swarmers through closed swarms**

- *Incentives*: What’s in it for an alpha swarmer to join?
- *High-impact invites*: “Seduce” the alpha swarmers to join the VIP Swarm
- *Swarm!*: Quickly get the alphas comfortable as swarmers
- *Alpha Challenge*: e.g. “50 new members to join each alpha fan’s own swarm in a week”
- *Monitor* : Rewarding/recognising the best alphas, using them to find new alphas and pushing till the swarm reaches critical mass

**4 Traits of a great alpha swarmer:**

1. *Passion* – love the product, 2. *Messaging* – frequent texters and instant messengers, 3. *Publishing* – love to share things with others – post, comment and blog, 4. *Connections* – have their own “following” who respect them.

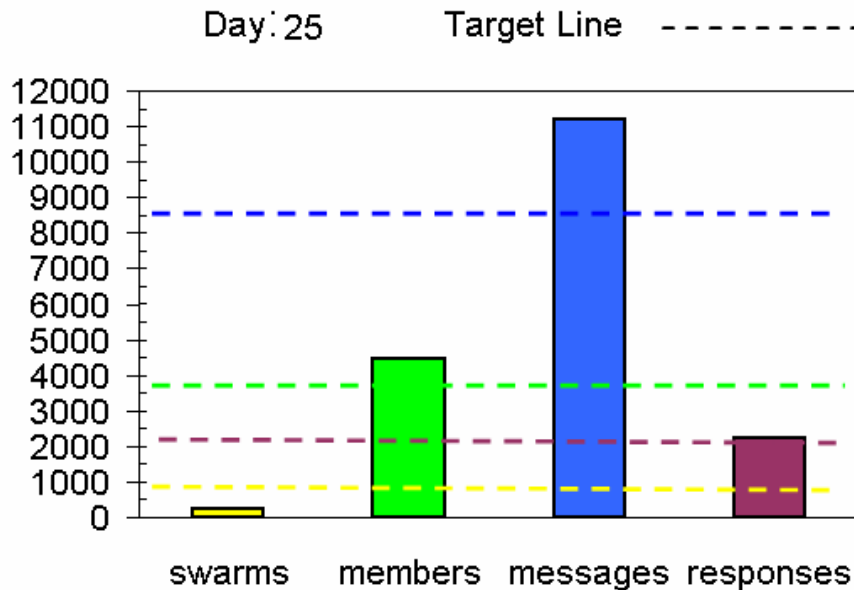
*STEP 4: Direct engagement with fans through open swarms*

- *Publicity:* The open swarms, good swarm names and how they will be promoted
- *Incentives:* The incentives for people to join the open swarms
- *Widgets:* Using the “swarm widget” to allow instant sign-up from *Facebook, Myspace* and the band’s website/blogs
- *Buddies:* Ensuring these new joiners are allocated and looked after in the closed swarms
- *Critical Mass:* Pushing and tracking till critical mass is reached



*STEP 5: Executing the swarm message plan to promote the new single*

Only when the fan base reaches critical mass is the message plan executed and closely monitored until the required response level is achieved:



*STEP 6: Keeping the swarm community warm till the next time!*

Now that the band have invested in building up a fan community, who can be communicated with at a single click to their mobile phones, they keep engaging with them, at a lower level of activity, to ensure that they stay connected and receptive to the next engagement marketing opportunity such as the band’s next big live event!

**For more information:** [www.swarmteams.com](http://www.swarmteams.com).