Gainsight's Community-Driven Product Feedback Loop

How Gainsight put their customer community
at the heart of the product development process.

Third time lucky

It's the year 2018.

Gainsight has decided to find a new community vendor. This will be the third time since they launched the project in 2014.

Yes, you read that right, it's Gainsight's third attempt at getting community right. The pressure is on to deliver. But not just for their own sake, for the sake of their customers, too.

So when Gainsight approached us, we were delighted. As a Customer Success Community platform on a mission to improve Customer Success in SaaS, having Gainsight choose us as their community platform further cemented our belief that community is (and always should be) at the heart of Customer Success.

As so often is the case in B2B SaaS, your company's success hinges on how successful you can make your customers (and your customers' customers) with your product. A huge part of making that happen comes down to collecting, understanding, prioritizing – and implementing – feedback from your customers.

Customer feedback, when applied correctly, is what paves the way for sustainable growth.

But the tricky part is creating an effective workflow. You need buy-in from relevant departments in your organization, you need the right technology, and you need to build a feedback loop that you can actually close.

But with a little help from us at inSided, that's exactly what Gainsight set out to deliver: A community-driven feedback loop.

But before we get into that part of the story, why use a customer community to gather product feedback in the first place?

Why use a community to gather product feedback?

All products spark questions, suggestions, and ideas from customers. But collecting, organizing, and acting on that feedback can be a tricky task for any business.

Online communities offer a secure, transparent space where customers can ask questions, start discussions, and submit ideas – all in one place. All you have to do is gather their feedback.

Online communities operate at the intersection of what your product does, and the two main things your customers want:

1.
Get maximum value from your product

2.
Have their feedback taken seriously

The beauty of it all? It's exactly what your Customer Success and Product team want, too!

When Gainsight launched their community on the inSided platform, one of their main goals was to close the loop on product feedback. But a big part of that was also to **show customers that not only was their opinion valued, it was also an integral part of the product development process.**

So how exactly did they do that? Let's take a look.

Community at the heart of product development

Back in 2014 Gainsight had roughly 150 customers and 120 employees. They also already had one of the largest communities in the Customer Success industry.

The problem? Their Customer Success Managers were inundated with product feedback from their customers.

At the time, the answer to this problem was to channel that feedback through their Customer Support department. As you can imagine, this was far from ideal, especially given the fact that support agents are usually not equipped to respond to customer feedback.

So Gainsight turned to community for a solution, with its primary function being to serve as the heart of the product feedback loop, and ultimately – closing that loop..

The mission?

"To provide a forum for customers, partners, and Gainsight employees to provide product feedback that impacts the roadmap, and to receive product support and solutions from peers."

They realized immediately that one of the most important aspects of making this work was to get their Product team committed to the goal of the community.

Getting company-wide buy-in

Denise Stokowski, Group VP Platform Products at Gainsight explains, "It's not that complex a use case, but the workflow is extremely important. We wanted to make sure the community wasn't just for Customer Success, but also for our Product team."

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Having a platform that made it as simple and as effective as possible for all teams to work together was key in Gainsight's decision to go with inSided as their community vendor.

It was the buy-in from Customer Success, Support and Product, that really started them on the path to success. As Denise states, "Community is a team sport." If you want your customers to keep coming back to your community and giving their feedback, you have to have your product teams on board, willing to reply and be transparent about their processes.

Product Managers

Support

VP/SVP's

Customer Success

Customers

Partners

Community Managers
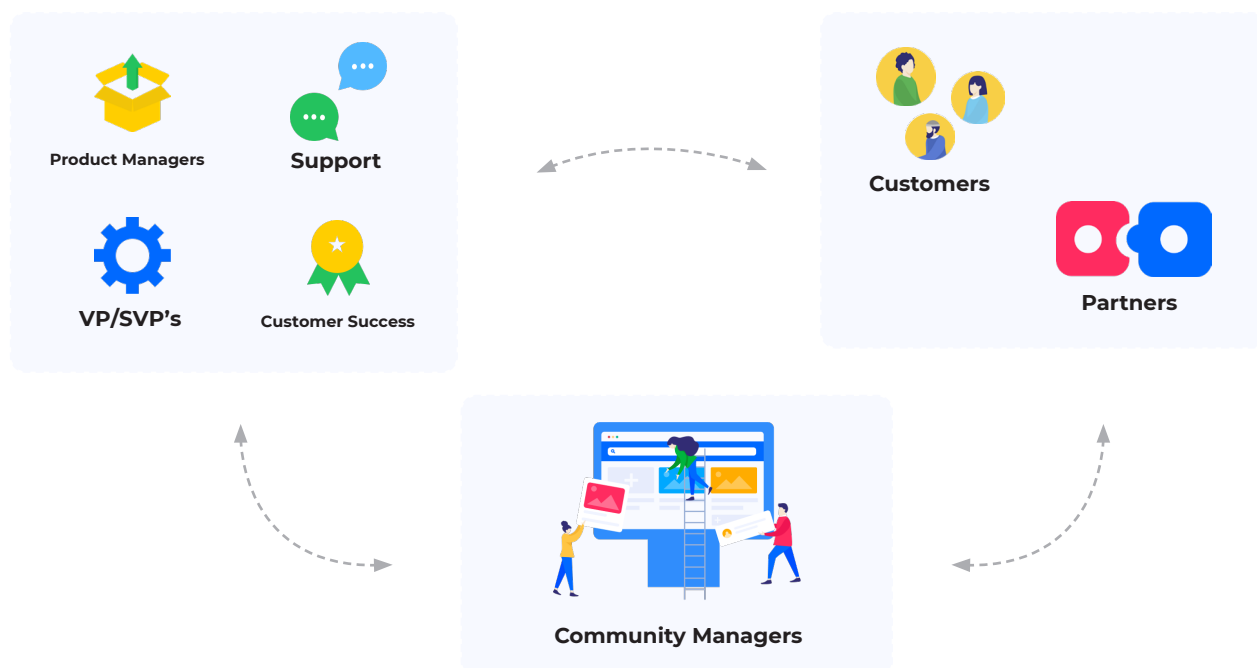
Making customers feel heard

When teams take the time to respond to customer feedback it makes them feel heard, respected, and ultimately more likely to come back again. As Denise put it, "We wanted our users to get more return on investment for their time when coming to the community."

Of course, Gainsight also has a number of great ways to show their appreciation for customers giving feedback. For example, they use gamification in the form of leaderboards and badges in the community to reward the most active contributors. Plus, they celebrate a "Star of the month" for the best idea in the community.

As a result of this gamification, the ideas come in thick and fast. In 2019 alone, Gainsight gathered—and implemented—over 70 customer ideas from the community.

Measuring Gainsight's Community Success:
Implemented customer ideas

Prodcut Ideas Implementation from Community

Final words

After years of ups and downs, Gainsight can finally build a feedback loop they can actually close.

With the right technology in place, a scalable customer feedback workflow, and with an engaged customer community, Customer Success and Product can work together to deliver the best customer experience possible for Gainsight's customers.

Do you want to discover how a community can help you leverage customer feedback?

Book a demo today →

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