


Using Your Own Online Community: An AARP Case Study

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Background and Challenge

- AARP launched a new campaign this summer aimed at helping our members lose weight and stay fit.
- The Fat2Fit Challenge debuted in March and was lead by fitness expert, Carole Carson, who had achieved great success losing weight with the help of her local community.
- Carole brought great things to the table:
 - Tips and advice for our users
 - Knowledge that weight loss worked when done in groups and with encouragement
 - Examples of past success

The challenge for AARP?...
Replicate a successful weight loss campaign online with tools that are not immediately associated with the web.

The Solution: Leverage the 1-year old AARP Online Community, with nearly 1/2 million registered users. Different than other social media, AARP is active within lifestyle groups, not profiles.



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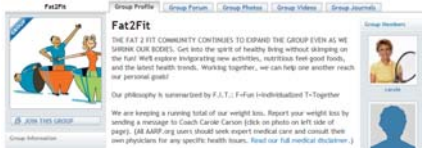
Program Overview and Objectives

- Program Overview:** Fat2Fit Challenge is a 2-month weight loss campaign targeted to users of the AARP Online Community. The goal is to get these users to meet/or exceed a collective weight-loss goal. Health and weight concerns are often cited as major concerns for people 50+.
- Objectives:**
 - Use AARP's Online Community to demonstrate the viability of the online community to carry an editorial program through the following measurable objectives:
 - At least 2,000 members join the Fat2Fit Group
 - Generate at least 100 group posts
- We will employ a host of tools to get people to participate in the Challenge:**
 - Weight tracking widget
 - Contest featuring weekly prizes awarded to users in the Community with great/inspiring stories
 - Weekly mini-challenges
 - High interaction and visibility from the fitness expert, Carole Carson, including one-to-one communication with users
- Paid marketing is minimal and the success of the campaign is really dependent on word of mouth and via internal channels including promotion on AARP's blog.**

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Results

- Almost 4K members belong to the Fat2Fit Group, 100% above goal
 - Remains the group with the most members in AARP Online Community
 - More than 3500 posts were created in the group, 35X more than goal
- Other Results:**
- Those 3500 posts were viewed more than 85K times by users
 - During the 2-month promo period, there were more than 36MM pageviews to the entire content package
 - More than 70 journals were contributed by Carole as well as other members



Learnings

- The 2010 campaign is already scheduled!
- Fat2Fit was the first program where people beyond the web team started to pay attention to the viability of AARP's own social network
- Considered un-sponsorable by Ad Sales pre-launch, the 2010 program has multiple advertisers interested.
- Because more people were interested in the Community conversations, the program is being reworked to focus even more on social media.
 - Will use Twitter and Facebook and encourage conversations/encouragement in those vehicles
 - Sub-groups within the AARP Online Community will be built
 - Less emphasis on weight tracking tool; barely used by members

Challenges with Measuring Community Impact

- What is the value of a group member or post?
 - While AARP has data that shows the value of an email address and registration to the Association, social media is still too new to attribute a numerical value.
 - There is an assumption that the more engaged a user is with AARP, the more likely they are to stay or become members, but this has not been proven in terms of social media.
- Is 4,000 members really that good?
 - With a new Online Community, the 2K group member goal was chosen because it represented the largest group at that time.
 - AARP has over 3,000 groups in the Community, but more than 6MM unique visitors, so the business still struggles over the definition of what's "good."
