

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Getting a community off the ground can be a daunting task, so it may come as no surprise that some communities will want to band together. This is where “partnering” comes in: to put it simply, partnering is when communities promote each other in order to not only boost awareness of the existence of each community, but also to drive new traffic to those places. Partnering can also help communities thrive by sharing users with common interests. And it can even be used for moderation purposes!

Note: in this context the term “partnering” is different from the [Discord Partner Program](#). The kind of partnering that is being referred to is when two communities enter an agreement to work together. While the [Discord Partner Program](#) is a program for large community-led servers that are the best-of-the-best that Discord has to offer. Moving forward in this article, anytime “partnering” is referred to it is with this definition in mind.

Why partner with other communities?

There are many different reasons why one community may want to partner with another. The most common reason is that communities that are similar may want to share their user-base with one another. In theory, this strengthens both communities, but it can have negative consequences, which will be discussed later.

Another reason for partnering may be for growth purposes. For instance, community A may want others to know about them, and thus partners with community B. In this scenario community A gets promoted in community B, and community B *also* gets promoted in community A. This is mutually beneficial, but can have negative consequences if not done properly that will be touched upon shortly.

Communities may also want to partner up if they share a common interest. For example, LGBTQ+ communities may partner together because they share a common goal and have overlapping user bases. This kind of partnership not only helps to promote both communities, but also helps the users that are in both communities find spaces for them. For example, a user may join a general purpose LGBTQ+ community, but they may want to also be in a more specific community that is *also* LGBTQ+ focused, such as one based around an LGBTQ+ book club for those who are readers.

Usually when partnering with another community you will want to include a few basic details in any partnership announcements including a description of the community you're partnering with, a reminder to follow rules/guidelines of the community, a way to join the community in question, and possibly some information of what the community entails such as their unique emotes or the interesting events they run.

These details will help show users that you aren't partnering with another server to simply promote, but that you are instead invested in the community itself and think that this partnership will strengthen your community. Sharing these details allows you to be transparent with your community, but also gives users a reason to join the community you're partnered with.

What does a Partnership look like?

There are a few different ways communities can show off a partnership with another community.

For communities with multiple partner servers, creating a channel specifically to share information about partners is likely ideal. These are often simply called #partners or #community-partners.

A more direct way to share news would be to make an announcement that lets your community know that a partnership is in effect.

A third option for sharing news of partnership is by utilizing “Invasive Advertising” which is a method of advertising that is invasive by design. From the name, it is easy to understand why this method is often discouraged due to its widespread dislike by users and tendency to hurt partnerships. Usually this kind of partnership takes place in the DM’s of users.

For example, a user may join a community and at the instant they join, a bot will DM them with information about a particular partnership. This is regarded as spammy and is disliked by most on Discord, and it may be against the Terms of Service since it can be investigated as a form of spam, platform abuse, or general inauthentic behavior that undermines the way Discord was intended to be used. For this reason, we recommend not utilizing this form of partnership because it can be a hindrance in cultivating trust in new members and a healthy partnership program. This form of promotion is useful for large and ever-growing community networks, so an option to consider could be to allow users to opt-in to a bot who can share news of similar communities in DMs as opposed to forcing it onto everyone. Otherwise, we recommend that it is better to keep news of partnerships in announcement based channels in your server and not in DMs.

Evaluating Partnership Health

Sometimes partnerships can turn sour. This can include not seeing many users join from the partnered community, the partnered community no longer upholding similar standards to what you hold your own community to, or toxic users joining from a partnered community. It is important to consider all of these things before starting a partnership and keeping them in mind as your partnership continues.

So, what happens if you don't see many users joining from a partnered community? There are a few ways to gauge how many people are joining from the community.

The first is word of mouth - ask new users where they came from. The second and probably most prevalent is creating unique invite links or other such tracking methods to see where users are coming from. This is seen as the best way to gauge new user traffic as it is something that does not require direct input and it is something that can be looked at in a graph or data analysis tool if you are so inclined.

Unrelated to data analysis, but just as important, are the users that are coming from a partnered community. If the users coming from a partnered community are rude, rule-breaking, or otherwise toxic, then there may be a problem. The best way to prevent this is to watch the community that you want to partner with *before* partnering with it. You may also want to talk with the staff of the community and see what they tolerate and do not tolerate. This is the best way to familiarize yourself with the community before partnering, though it isn't foolproof and of course issues may still arise. If the user base does turn out to be toxic, it may be best to terminate the partnership and go your separate ways.

It's also important to ensure that the communities you are partnered with are maintaining environments that align with how you maintain your own server. Should that change, it may not make sense for you to continue a partnership. For example, it does not make sense for a family friendly space to partner with a server that isn't family friendly.

In another instance, if you see the staff of a partnered community not adhering to rules you hold your own staff to that can be harmful, you can also break a partnership as it can begin to affect their users negatively as well. Let's say you are cultivating a positive environment, but you see the staff of a partnered community actively participating in negative discussion of other communities with

their users- you have every right to end a partnership to avoid being associated with that and to show you do not endorse it.

Private moderation partnerships

A more niche type of partnership is the kind of partnership that is private and solely related to moderation between communities. This is where the staff teams of both communities will pool their resources and use them together to make sure that bad actors stay out of their respective communities. This is usually a mutually beneficial partnership, as both communities will gain knowledge and resources. For instance, **Community A** may have spammers joining daily and spamming their community, so they will give the relevant information to the community they are partnered with (**Community B**). With this preemptive data, Community B will be able to ban or otherwise deal with the spammers before they start becoming an issue. This benefits Community B and shows that Community A is interested in helping Community B, which builds trust between the communities.

Bots are a unique benefit to this kind of partnership. Bots are typically used to help communities pool things like ban lists or information centered around problematic users. A shared moderation bot can allow certain actions, such as spam related bans to be logged in both communities.

Likewise, if one community has cultivated a list of toxic or otherwise problematic users that are in their community, this list would be available for both communities to share and reference.

Something important to keep in mind in this type of partnership is that the moderators of any server should have the final say before a user (or group of users) are banned or otherwise reprimanded. This allows the moderators to look at all the information and ask for more info if needed, but nothing is acted on without knowledge being shared.

Conclusion

Community partnerships can be wonderful tools to enrich multiple communities. Partnerships can be used for the purpose of creating a network of communities, or even for private moderation-related matters. If done correctly, communities working together can get a lot done and create a better experience for their respective users.