# How NetApp empowers its online community

Through expanding its knowledge base, the company has helped more people solve problems using intelligent data infrastructure

Executive Summary

NetApp is focused on helping businesses get the most out of their data. The company opens a new world of possibilities for its customers by having an integrated approach that seamlessly combines data storage, data services, and AI-powered CloudOps solutions.

Despite its cutting-edge approach toward data services, internally, NetApp was relying on manual processes for customer support that took time and energy away from users and employees. To create a better user experience, NetApp looked to make improvements through its online community. Since making changes, NetApp saw:

➔   **20% reduction in cost-per-answer**
➔   **Improved CSAT and Customer Effort scores**
➔   **Increased website visits — 75% coming via Google Search**

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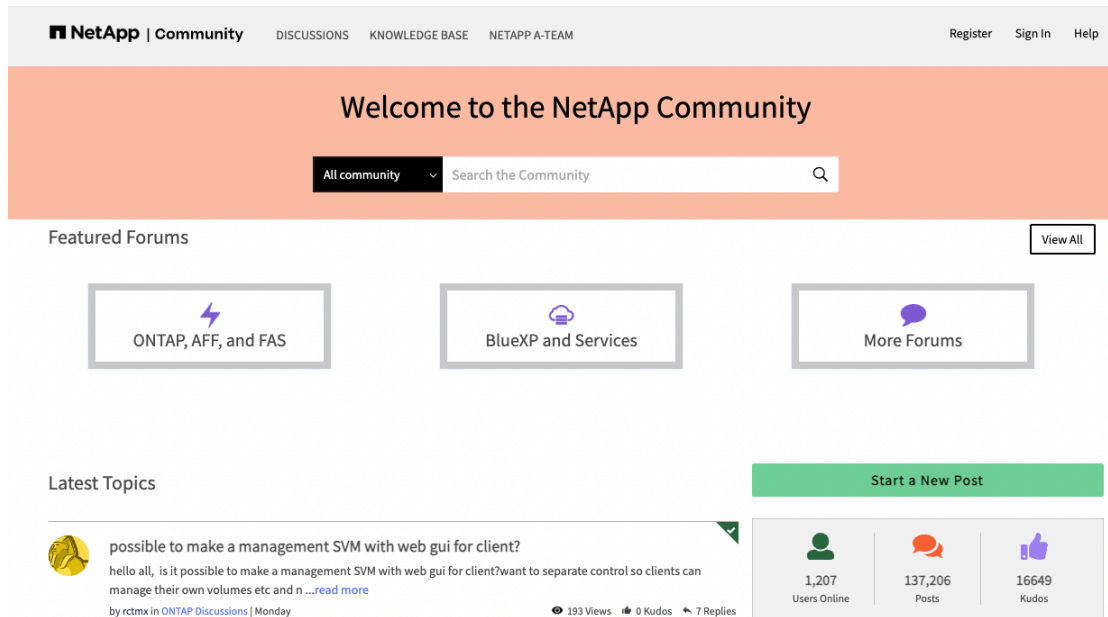
Netapp's Rationale for Change

Working across different customer environments and the world's biggest public clouds, NetApp places high importance on a smooth customer service experience, but recognized opportunities for enhancement.

For years, NetApp required users to submit support tickets to resolve issues. This took time and money away from more urgent requests and wasn't a great customer experience, particularly for questions that could have been answered via automation or a self-service option.

Having introduced its online community in 2008, NetApp realized this resource could be better utilized to help solve its roadblocks with customer support.

> "The support engineers love our community because they're learning about new things, and our customers love it because they're getting answers and learning from the shared experiences
>
> **Drew Claybook**
> Community Manager, NetApp

Solution

In addressing challenges with the customer support processes, NetApp focused on improving customer satisfaction by reducing the effort it takes to solve known problems by way of its community.

NetApp analyzed common customer problems and requests — taking that data to enhance self-service capabilities into its community platform. Additionally, the company aimed to streamline user experience by enabling users to search for answers in the Knowledge Base or initiate a support case, all from a single, convenient location. Now with these improvements, the company helps customers get ahead of problems before they arise.

NetApp took a three-step approach growing its online community:

Education: Recognizing its users and members often seek content when encountering challenges, NetApp prioritizes continuous enhancement of its Knowledge Base. This repository incorporates a mixture of expert support — in both written and video formats — and self-service options.

Collaboration: The NetApp community serves as a platform for users to share their experiences, facilitating engaging conversations among NetApp employees, users, and partners. Moreover, exclusive "micro-communities" cater to partners, resellers, and employees, offering unique member benefits in exchange for active participation.

Through ongoing dialogue within these micro-communities, valuable feedback is garnered to drive product enhancements.

Interactivity: Members are encouraged to express appreciation for helpful contributions by awarding Kudos and earning various incentive badges, such as the beloved Baby Yoda badge on May 4th. These interactive elements not only maintain user engagement but also provide valuable insights into the most impactful content within the community.

Outcomes

Making improvements to its online community brought numerous positive results for NetApp. It reduced its cost-per-answer by nearly 20%, and strengthened its Knowledge Base, driving increased website visits — more than 75% of which come from Google referrals. These improvements caused a ripple effect across the company, too, with improved CSAT and Customer Effort scores.

Community Improvement Outcomes

1
Reduced cost-per-answer by 20%

2
Strengthened Knowledge Base has increased Google referrals by 75%

3
Improved CSAT and Customer Effort Scores

NetApp proves that a thriving community opens up new opportunities for businesses.