SMALL BUT MIGHTY

MIGHTY
NETWORKS
FOUNDER GINA
BIANCHINI ON THE
GROWING POWER
OF CUSTOM,
TIGHT-KNIT
COMMUNITIES.

SUCCESS STORY

"When you get to create your own world, you get to set up your own cultural norms."

n a world where an estimated 2.5 billion people have Facebook profiles, it's clear we're all looking for community. Gina Bianchini is passionate about community, too, although not necessarily the kind Facebook offers.

"I believe passionately that the right model for the internet and the way we connect in the world is in smaller communities that are built around interests, topics, passions, and goals and that are led by creators," she says.

Bianchini is the founder and CEO of Mighty Networks, which allows creators to integrate their communities and courses all in one place. Formed in 2017, its clients include popular brands like Adriene Mishler's Find What Feels Good (FWFG) yoga community, The Turquoise Table, Knit Camp, and 100K Incubator.

Mighty Networks has become her claim to fame, but her belief in the power of online community has been a driving force for much of her career.

Prior to her current endeavor, Bianchini created Mightybell, an enterprise-only platform that hosted social networks of Intuit, American Express, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She also co-founded LeanIn.org in 2013, with Sheryl Sandberg, Dave Goldberg, and Rachel Thomas. And before that, she and Marc Andreessen formed Ning, another custom social network platform.

In short, Gina Bianchini has become a master of creating new, thriving online communities.





"What FWFG found on Facebook is that people were, as their administrator put it, 'Coming in hot,'" Bianchini says. Prior to clicking on the FWFG Facebook group, the person would have just been fighting with a family member about politics or seeing a newsfeed containing "47 things that their friends or family believe they aren't outraged enough about, because this is the way that Facebook drives engagement."

That simmering, amped up energy didn't dissipate when the person clicked over to the FWFG Facebook group. Little confrontations and arguments sparked.

In a yoga community.

"We don't need that vibe," Bianchini says. "We don't need that!"

FWFG moved its community into a Mighty Networks setting. Today, its members regularly (and peacefully) engage across multiple areas of interest.

At Mighty Networks, creators are given the tools to not only form rewarding communities, but their courses and member payments are integrated into the experience as well.

"I believe passionately that we are at the very early stages of creators being able to charge more money for a premium experience that is off Facebook," Bianchini says. "By combining their online courses, community, payments, and mastermind groups all in one place, they'll be able to build a much more valuable asset that they can price at a premium and deliver in a much more delightful way, both for their members and themselves."

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Building a Community

Bianchini advises that you must identify a clear and compelling purpose for your community. Whether it comes from the course or somewhere else, it must be clear and specific.

"When your community isn't an afterthought, you're able to create something much more valuable for people, something that allows your content to demonstrate accountability, social proof, have amazing testimonials, and ultimately have people be able to achieve the results and transformation that they're willing to pay for and can't get on their own."

To serve your existing or future community well, first understand why people come to the group. Primarily, Bianchini says they're wanting to connect with other people who are on the same journey they've chosen. They all want to get better at their common interest and they trust that this gathering of people and its leader(s) can move them along the path in a way they cannot experience if they go it alone.

A Future So Bright

For Bianchini, a woman who has spent well over a decade building platforms for communities and interaction, the future looks bright. What does she see?

"A world filled with millions of vibrant and unique communities that are creator-led, where people are mastering something interesting or important together, on their own terms."

No doubt she'll be right there, making it all possible.



Author: Rebeca Seitz is a writer, producer, and founding President & CEO of two businesses. Her books have been published by HarperCollins and B&H Group and her last screenplay was produced with Out of Order Studios and written with Disney veteran Bob Burris. She has appeared on NPR, CNN, Huffington Post Live, and more regarding responsible use of mass media. Connect with Rebeca on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn. See her writing, listen to her podcast, and find out more at rebecaseitz.com.



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