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D3.1 THE NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM AND GROWTH HACKING PLAN

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Abstract	This deliverable will consist of the first version of the NGI community platform and a report describing the its features and offered services, the main players identified and will describe the planned growth hacking activities to be pursued to ensure active engagement of users to the platform and more in general to the NGI dialogues
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* R: Document, report (excluding the periodic and final reports)

DEM: Demonstrator, pilot, prototype, plan designs

DEC: Websites, patents filing, press & media actions, videos, etc.

OTHER: Software, technical diagram, etc.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From a communication and marketing point of view, during Phase 1, NGI focused on awareness creation, especially among researchers and innovators. Within Phase 2 the ambition is to **reach out a wider audience and engage all target stakeholders** into the realisation of the NGI vision, i.e. creation of a human-centric Internet. Concretely, in marketing terms, this means:

- ➔ Attract the right audience
- ➔ Turn prospects into leads
- ➔ Build brand preference
- ➔ Convert to a customer

NGI4ALL tackles the above challenges through different means, and one of the main tools to reach a **wider and more dynamic audience** will be the **NGI community platform**.

The NGI community platform will gather and engage a growing community of stakeholders, by **mainly leveraging on the Open Calls** that the upcoming NGI RIAs will run, as a first selling point for acquiring a significant number of **newcomers** (applicants, namely startups and SMEs), but these will **not be the only stakeholders to attract**.

The goal of the platform is to **attract and engage the players of the NGI ecosystem**, all the “doers”, the start-ups, the researchers, the innovators. The objective is to create a dynamic community where synergies are found and where content and crucial information is gathered.

As **first stakeholder’s entry point**, the community platform is aimed at converting the deal-flow of **applicants to NGI RIAs open calls** in active users within the community, by following a **growth hacking plan** to achieve the highest distribution of contents with minimum budget.

Once an active pool of applicants will be attracted, together with **early adopters** (i.e. current partners of the NGI initiative, namely RIAs and CSAs that will be invited to join the community platform), a **wider audience will be reached** (researchers, innovators, general public).

Strategies included in the growth hacking approach include:

- ➔ **writing posts** related to web sites and blogs that are already a reference for the Internet innovation community, such as TechCrunch;
- ➔ **addressing specific people** via Twitter through a trigger (e.g. a direct message to representatives of an SME that could apply to Open Calls);
- ➔ **making direct references to**
 - **researchers and innovators** that may be interested in Open Calls (firstly) OR
 - a **wider audience** willing to find suitable collaboration opportunities and attractive content related to Next Generation Internet technologies (secondly).



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ABBREVIATIONS

CPA	Cost per acquisition
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DoA	Description of the Action
GDPR	EU General Data Protection Regulation
IP	Internet Protocol
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NGI	Next Generation Internet
RIA	Research Innovation Action
SSO	Single Sign-On
TCP	Transmission Control Protocol
URL	Uniform Resource Locator



1 NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM

NGI COMMUNITY platform will be based on FundingBox community platform (<https://spaces.fundingbox.com/>). This is a **dynamic and interactive** web based platform that includes communication services fostering collaborative work, aiming at facilitating interaction among stakeholders and providing information on best practices, trends in the market, etc. NGI4ALL project consortium will design NGI COMMUNITY platform applying the same assumptions and approach that have been considered in the design of FundingBox community platform: tailor the platform to the needs found for projects and initiatives to build communities and ecosystems around them.

The adoption of FundingBox community platform ensure that NGI Community Platform will benefit FundingBox experience and by **transforming static websites in dynamic communities**, where conversations and knowledge can be gathered and shared. FundingBox platform largely evolved over the time, thanks to the incorporation of users' feedbacks and new features and functionalities have been developed in order to offer a tool ideal to **build up communities around projects and initiatives**.

1.1 INTRODUCTION: FEATURES OF COMMUNITY PLATFORM

FundingBox communities offers **information** (trends, news, events, technologies, funding opportunities), **inspiration** (exclusive content curated by experts and interlocutors: live chats, Q&As...), **support** (experts will advise, but members can also create synergies and build partnerships) and **fun** (by networking with people interested in adoption of Next Generation Internet technologies).

1.1.1 OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM

FundingBox Platform is mostly a **communication tool** where knowledge is shared for the sake of the community, with two main features.

- ➔ Its main characteristic is a **chat base mode (Spaces)** that serves as base to communicate and interact among the parties (1 to many users or 1:1).
- ➔ This is complemented by what we call **Collections** a range of features that empower users to build and share knowledge.
 - Basically, a collection **allows users to publish specific contents in spaces** (collection content is announced to the community in one specific channel / space) and gather together in one single place all those publications with a specific aim (i.e. articles, events, questions, etc...).
 - Then, collections will allow to **look for specific contents** within a concrete community, since they contain a search engine (see collections screenshot below).



1.1.2 AVAILABLE FEATURES

1.1.2.1 Main features (Spaces & Collections)

➔ **Spaces:** Each community is formed by “Spaces”, each Space is a channel of communication. They can be defined and shaped according to the needs of each community.

Main features in FundingBox communities are created under “**Spaces**”. A “**Space**” is a section where information related to a specific topic is posted. Each community identifies, decides and creates the “**Spaces**” that address its needs.

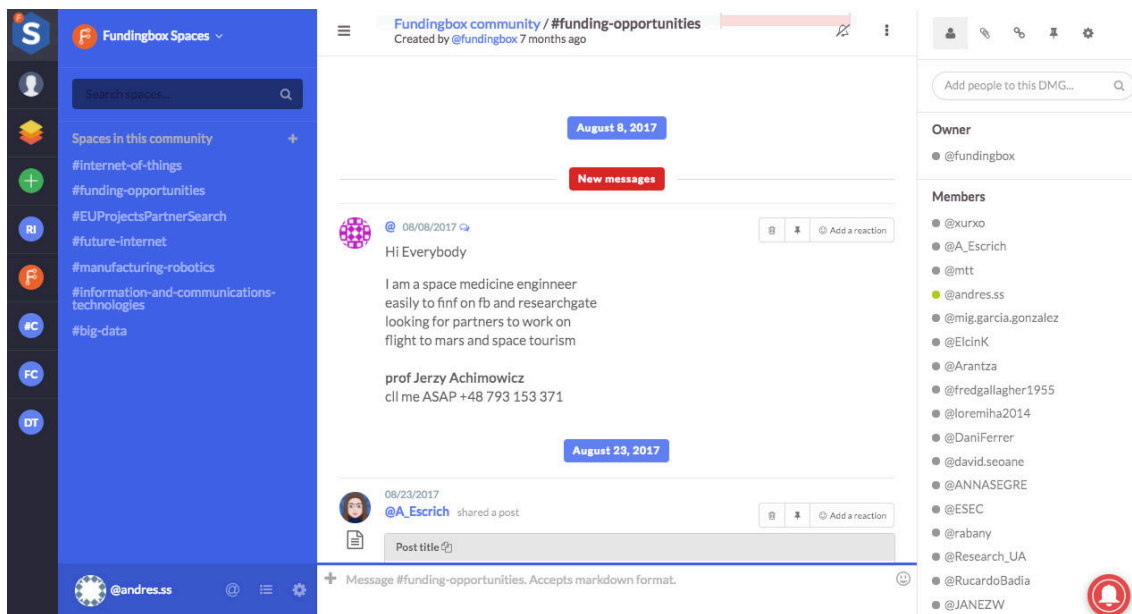


FIGURE 1: SPACES OVERVIEW

➔ **Collections:** Collections represent a set of features to empower crowd knowledge creation and interaction among users within a space. The different features can be **activated or hidden according to the needs of each community**, and may include:

- **Announcements, questions and events.** Members of the communities have the option to post announcements, questions and events. This increases the interactions within members of the community, creates connections and enhances the relations among them.
- **Articles.** Each community can publish articles related to their interests. It can be blog posts, articles related to the topic of interest, etc
- **FAQs.** There is a section of FAQs about specific subtopics within the community where any community member can post questions. They can be answered by any member and the results can be voted
- **Ideas.** Members can post ideas on different topics related to the community and get feedback from other members, including experts.
- **Marketplaces / Showcases.** Each community can decide to have one or more marketplaces to showcase specific companies, products, professionals, services, etc.

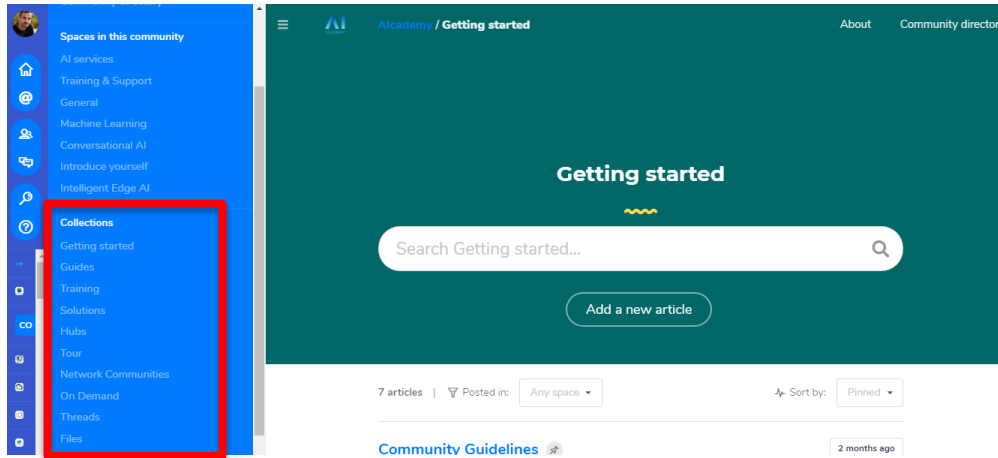


FIGURE 2: COLLECTIONS OVERVIEW (GETTING STARTED EXAMPLE)

1.1.2.2 Other features:

- ➔ **Community directory:** A directory to access all members of the community is available. There is the possibility to highlight certain profiles, for example, of the members of the consortium or the ambassadors.
- ➔ **Matchmaking tool:** This matchmaking works in a way where each user receives suggestions according to his / her interest's potential profiles of people with similar interests making easy for them to connect and hold one to one conversation. Through this matchmaking tool the user will also be able to: discover peers through interactions or searching in the members directory and contacting peers and chatting with them on one to one basis.
- ➔ **One-to-one chat:** Text conversations can be started in private by community members.
- ➔ **One-to-many chat:** Private groups / spaces can be created to communicate about a topic of interest.
- ➔ **Settings:** Each community can decide the set-up of their community: setting the tagline, background images, description, activating the features of preference, selecting the team members and giving them specific permissions (administrator, moderator, etc).

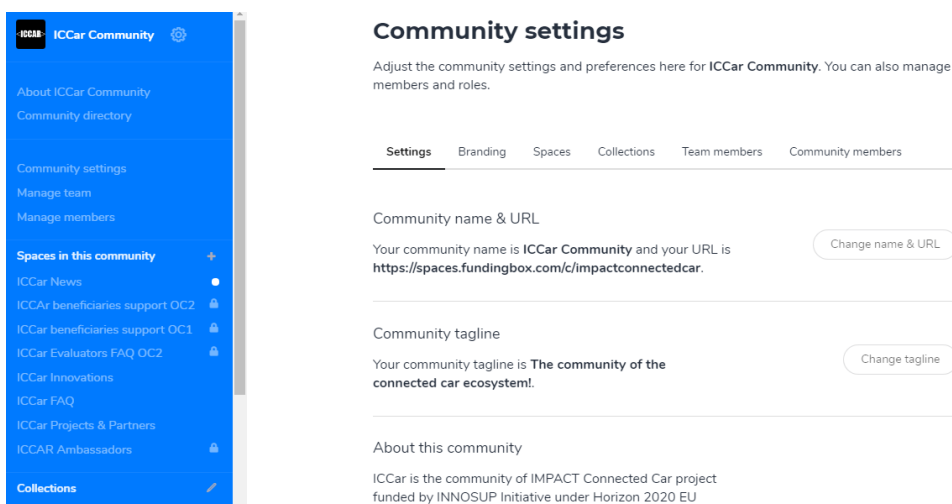


FIGURE 3: OTHER FEATURES OVERVIEW (COMMUNITY SETTINGS)



1.1.2.3 Available roles in the Community Platform

Besides **regular member** (user that has signed-up to the community and has the capacity to publish content in the spaces directly or through collections), the platform has the following roles to support the community management, moderate interactions, edit content or organize activities within the community.

COMMUNITY PLATFORM AVAILABLE ROLES	
Role	Attributions
Pro Member	A member that has no specific permissions but who has the special privilege of not needing to sign-up to the community and has been invited by a Community Manager or Administrator. He / She has the attribution to accept or deny the invitation. He / She has the special treatment of not having to pass by onboarding (sign-up process).
Moderator	A member that has permissions to approve or deny members requests, as well as posts in the group. Also, can remove posts and comments on posts.
Support Operator	Gives support to community members while they are interacting with features of the platform.
Community Manager	Responsible for creating and managing the online voice of an organization to build brand awareness within the community. Creates Spaces and Collections and proposes types of content.
Administrator	Has the attributions of previous roles and also has the faculty to assign/remove roles to other members of the community.

TABLE 1: FUNDINGBOX COMMUNITY PLATFORM AVAILABLE ROLES

1.1.2.4 Advantages of FundingBox platform

There are several software solutions in the market¹ that could overlap in different aspects with those provided by FundingBox. However, none of them is able to cover all the functionalities offered by FundingBox solution. Each community needs to be supported by features that are relevant to it and be tailored to the community members: FundingBox solution offers to the **administrator the possibility to customise the community by adding the desired features desired** and putting the emphasis in the **crowd knowledge base approach**, where the users are the players providing most of the knowledge and gaining the benefits.

In the following we list a set of key benefit that NGI will leverage thanks to the adoption of FundingBox platform.

¹ Other Community Platforms available in the market include (non-exhaustive list): F6s; Mobilize; Slack; Riot; Whatsapp; Telegram; Basecamp; Vanilla Forums. See deeper analysis on APPENDIX A.



➔ Mobile apps

Mobile access is crucial to build communities. For this reason, FundingBox has developed mobile apps available in the App Store and Google Play Store. This gives a lot of immediacy to users to be able to post and hold conversations. A desktop app will be released in the coming months.

➔ A community of over 19.300 makers, entrepreneurs, startups and tech SMEs

There is an already established NGI community of users that basically gathers together NGI newsletter subscribers, NGI map members and a quite active LinkedIn group.

There is not a FundingBox-based NGI community, but the new users' community will not start from scratch. Beyond the already established community mentioned before that will be approached to be invited to join the community, FundingBox already has a community of users that match with NGI profiles and that already signed up to the platform in other communities addressing areas related to NGI.

Concretely, FundingBox community has **already 19.368 registered members** (Data of April 2019). Areas of interest of these members are related to Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Smart Mobility, Start-ups' Acceleration, Decentralized Technologies, Digital Innovation Hubs, GDPR, among others. These areas are related to internet developments, which will be of value to target an interesting base of members for NGI.

➔ Capacity to evolve the platform

Being a platform built by us, we are all ears to evolve the platform according to the inputs and requests of the FundingBox and NGI community. This gives us flexibility to include certain features and requests in the platform roadmap development.

➔ Community of communities

Within the NGI community we can give space and capacity to other players to build their own communities and to have all of them connected. A clear example of this is LEDGER project that already has a community in the platform² that can be connected to the NGI community³.

1.2 NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM SPACES & COLLECTIONS

Although the **NGI portal will be re-structured** and **rebranding of NGI initiative** is pending of definitive approval, we can consider current NGI portal structure as a **starting point** to propose a **logical structure of Spaces and Collections** that can be made available according to the potential features offered by FundingBox communities. The final aim is to make the NGI portal more interactive by providing access to a community platform with the following structure:

² LEDGER Community: <https://spaces.fundingbox.com/c/ledger>

³ Link to community already available before launching (community test): <https://spaces.fundingbox.com/c/ngi-next-generation-internet>



1.2.1.1 Proposed Spaces

- ➔ **NGI/News&Events:** to stay tuned about NGI initiative news and events.
- ➔ **NGI/Open Calls & Funding opportunities:** to share and discover funding opportunities in Europe around NGI.
- ➔ **NGI/Map Marketplace & Support:** to showcase members and stakeholders of interest while supporting NGI Map members if they want to receive or provide support / services to other community members.
- ➔ **NGI/Introduce Yourself:** a space where members can tell who their, what brought them to the NGI community and what they would like to talk about.

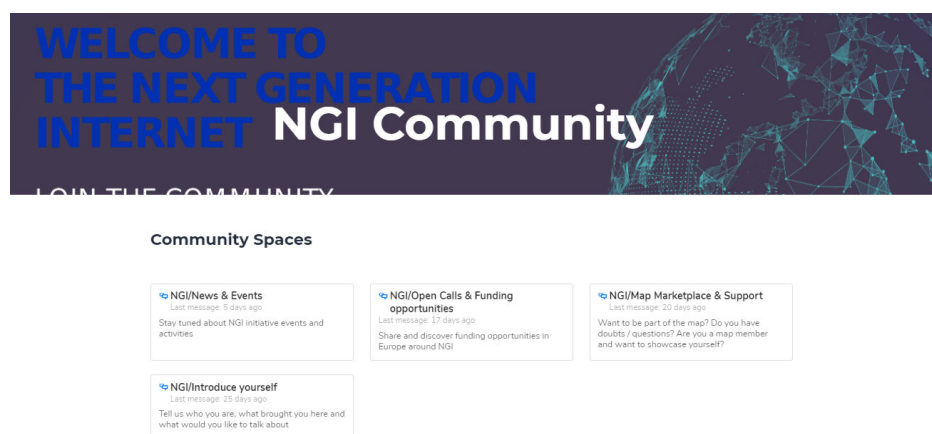


FIGURE 4: OVERVIEW OF NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM SPACES (TEST PLATFORM, BEFORE NEW BRANDING)

1.2.1.2 Proposed Collections

- ➔ **Announcements:** announcements of interest for the NGI community.
- ➔ **Events:** a list of events related to the interests of NGI community.
- ➔ **NGI Open Calls:**
 - This is the collection repository of the Space **NGI/Open Calls & Funding opportunities** mentioned above.
 - This showcase, would also include OPEN CALLS of RIAs, not only providing links to them, but also with the capability to interact with RIAs contacts if doubts arise about those funding opportunities from the users / potential applicants.
- ➔ **NGI People & Ambassadors:** a marketplace where ambassadors and other NGI recognized members or stakeholders are recognized.
- ➔ **NGI Projects:** Showcase / marketplace to provide dynamic content and redirect users to the CSA and RIA funding opportunities
- ➔ **NGI Questions & Consultations:** A collection where questions and consultations are posted, so that they are available and easy to access for all NGI community members.
- ➔ **NGI Map & Marketplace:** This is the collection repository of the **Space NGI/Map Marketplace & Support** mentioned above.



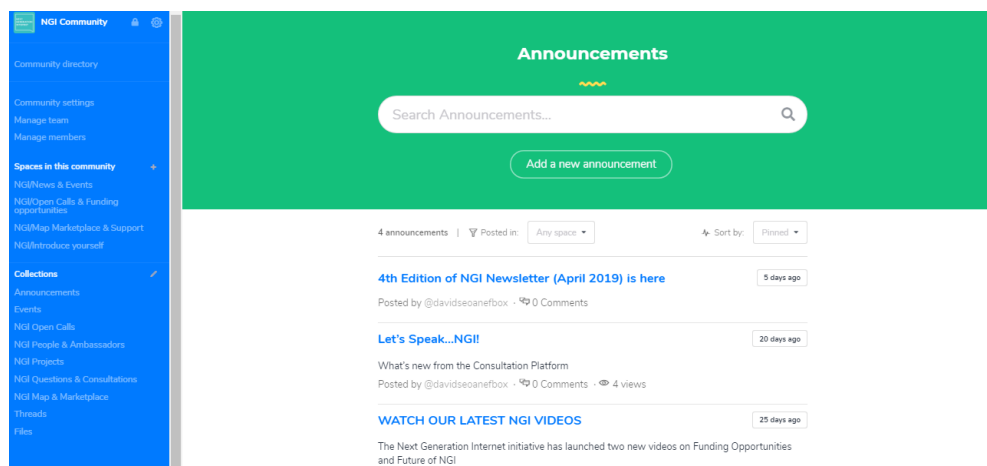


FIGURE 5: OVERVIEW OF NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM COLLECTIONS (I.E. ANNOUNCEMENTS)

1.3 NGI COMMUNITY ACCESS (REGISTRATION & LOGIN)

The NGI Community Platform will be highly exposed in the NGI Portal (<https://www.ngi.eu/>) which is the main and official access point for users willing to be part or know more about NGI initiative. To achieve that aim, a remarkable “Join NGI Community” button, banner, etc... will be added to the portal, linking to the specific NGI Community portal access that should have an URL under the NGI domain (e.g. “community.ngi.eu”).

Registration and Login will be therefore accessible through the NGI portal, and users registered there will join NGI Community with a triple aim, but additional services might be added via SSO (Single Sign-On):

- Join “powered by FundingBox” NGI Community Platform (managed by FundingBox)
- Subscribe to NGI Newsletter (managed by Martel)
- Showing users’ interest in joining the NGI Map (managed by Martel)

1.4 PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE NGI COMMUNITY PLATFORM

Information to be communicated has a twofold goal: i) raise awareness about NGI to attract potential beneficiaries and other involved members in the ecosystem; and ii) spread the output obtained to boost its impact and project it into the future.

The **main objectives on the communication side** are:

- ➔ Create awareness of Next Generation Internet at European level in relevant targets.
- ➔ Spread the word about NGI value proposition among European residents, companies and institutions.
- ➔ Attract stakeholders in partners’ ecosystem to create an initial community.
- ➔ Attract audience to grow community gathered around the Next Generation Internet theme.



On the **dissemination side, objectives to help in the exploitation of project outcomes** are:

- ➔ Raise awareness about solutions to attract entities in the ecosystem and foster its interaction with existing value chains.
- ➔ Attract European Regions to foster Next Generation Internet initiative in other regions/sectors.

1.4.1 EVENTS PROMOTION

The events will also be very relevant in the communication and dissemination plan of NGI Community, where events published in the NGI portal will be widely promoted, and vice versa. Taking profit of the ones already existing, with a coveted track record, to ensure the impact and 'value for money' of the resources dedicated to those events, NGI4ALL partners will attend offline events at a regional, national and international level. Furthermore, we will also organize events to spread the word about the project as a whole and the NGI Community in particular.

As described in the Growth Hacking Action Plan (Table 3), the following specific actions are foreseen in relation to events – community platform interactions:

- Create a list of relevant events (international, national and regional).
- Prepare flyers and merchandising to distribute them to attendees and in the venues.
- Gather contacts in those events to create databases.
- Send them personalised follow up emails about NGI open calls and community through SendGrid.
- Info sessions - slots in other events for SMEs.



1.4.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND NEWSLETTER INTERACTIONS

1.4.2.1 SOCIAL MEDIA

To increase the visibility of NGI COMMUNITY, social media networks are crucial. Thus, to grow NGI network and to convince stakeholders to join, an active promotion of the community via the already available NGI initiative social media channels will be made, namely:

- ➔ **Twitter.** Twitter is a very dynamic social network that covers the news in real-time at a global level. It is very dynamic, fast and direct, and its “microblogging” format will help to increase NGI network. It will also help to disseminate activities related to the project and cover and follow Next Generation Internet events to gather new leads online, through the already existing channel <https://twitter.com/NGI4eu>.
- ➔ **LinkedIn.** LinkedIn is the social network for business with more than 546 million users in more than 200 countries. Corporates, companies and personas have accounts to find synergies in the business world, that is what we think our targets are also on LinkedIn. The NGI initiative already counts on a very active group of over 11.000 members in this network: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2206279/>
- ➔ **Facebook.** Facebook is an online social media and social networking service that allows you to connect with family, friends and colleagues by sharing posts and videos and sending messages. But Facebook is also a source of information to get updated about news and companies’ activities, as well as a very powerful advertising platform, that is why having a NGI page on Facebook, which is already available (<https://www.facebook.com/NGI4EU/>) will help us spread the word about the project open calls and community, as well as to attract new leads both through organic and paid content when necessary.
- ➔ **YouTube.** YouTube is one of the leading video-sharing platforms at a global level that allows you to upload videos and create a community of subscribers. NGI available videos in YouTube channel will be continuously shared in the platform: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCafmlQ_fwe_FiwiiYj6QLUA/.

The messages spread in this social media accounts will be news, milestones and activities about the project that are relevant, interactive and engaging. Social media will be key to generate awareness about NGI as a European initiative with centralized access to Open Calls and as a community.

In order to measure our performance on social media channels and to improve it, we will review the following KPIs in relation to community key activities, i.e. comparing social media performance vs community performance in terms of:

- Number of followers or fans.
- % of growth of followers or fans.
- Engagement based on the interactions (likes, comments, shares) and impressions.



1.4.2.2 NEWSLETTER

NGI newsletter (already available and running under a monthly basis: <https://www.ngi.eu/subscribe/>) will be crucial to **gather leads and continue growing the NGI Community database**, so it will be a key channel of the communication and dissemination strategy. It will be sent every month to generate more deal flow to spread the word about NGI initiative, its Open Calls and the community.

The **newsletter and newflash**, already available and running (monthly publication) will be highly **remarked content in the NGI Community Platform**. Furthermore, as described in Section 1.3, the sign-up process in the Community Platform will be also used to attract NGI newsletter subscribers, as well as conveniently adapted to new NGI branding once available.

Thus, the NGI Community Platform will be the place where our targets will be able to subscribe to the newsletter. Once we **bring traffic to NGI portal, inviting users to join the community platform** and we acquire leads, we will activate them with a subscription form so they can receive the newsletter. This section will be very visible in the website to catch the visitor's attention. When having their contact email and their consent to receive information related to NGI according to the GDPR, it will be easier to send them to apply for the open calls or join the community.

Moreover, events, posts on social media and press releases and other media coverage will also be used to support the lead generation for the newsletter coming from the website subscription form.

1.4.2.2.1 Targeted email campaigns

Besides the newsletter, targeted email campaigns will be sent when needed with **specific calls to actions**. For example, the message will be different when disseminating an open call, the community, NGI info sessions or NGI presence in events.

Also, the target will vary depending on those messages and call to action. We might also consider sending some targeted emails for cross-dissemination purposes if we agree on it with any of our supportive partners.

For this email campaigns, a header and a footer will be created to cover NGI brand.

1.4.2.2.2 Newsletter and targeted email campaigns objectives

When measuring the impact and effectiveness of the newsletter and targeted email campaigns, we plan to collect in the reporting sheet:

- Number of new subscribers and % growth.
- Number of newsletters sent.
- Open rate.
- Click rate.



1.4.3 AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME

1.4.3.1 Intro & Objectives

Objective of the NGI Ambassadors Programme: to increase the community of NGI, raise its awareness and visibility and enhance the connections of its members.

About the NGI Ambassadors Programme: NGI ambassadors are all renowned and recognized experts in the Digital industry, Internet, Research, Political, Activism and Business sectors, with a push of followers and proved influence on the Internet. During their implication as ambassadors they will **post on a regular basis on their social networks about the different aspects of the NGI initiative, in the event they participate and being active members in the NGI Insight platform**. The programme designed intends to sign up **at least 30 influencers** along the length of the project and a list that will be continuously updated.

1.4.3.2 Profile of Ambassadors

Ambassadors are people who should be able to do the following, acting on their own behalf or on behalf of an entity:

- ➔ **Disseminate:** they have access to people, communities and contacts we do not, so they can disseminate information through their networks.
- ➔ **Create brand awareness:** they are recognized for a specific topic or area related to Next Generation Internet, so their recognition contributes to generate brand awareness of the NGI community and program.
- ➔ **Provide content:**
 - They join the community and provide content from their experience, work, and networks, all related to Next Generation Internet, on a regular basis.
 - They should be available for 1 or 2 Q&A sessions.

1.4.3.3 Where to look for Ambassadors?

- ➔ **Initially look for bloggers, journalists, and relevant actors** in the industry. Also check for interesting speakers in events we attend and take advantage of the networking done there by project manager or partners.
- ➔ **Then look within the ecosystem of partners and collaborating entities**, which include national entities. Also take into account the pool of interlocutors and active stakeholders that should be generated by Communication and Dissemination activities.

1.4.3.4 Ambassadors Types

We will ask Ambassadors to join NGI community, and thus become an early adopter and promoter of the community platform, via a specific Open Call within the NGI community or providing the a “Pro member” access.

As ambassador, he/she regularly provide contents to that community as well as stay tuned to our social media and share some posts and tweets.

There will be 3 types of ambassadors:



- ➔ **Influencers:** well-known people from next generation internet technologies (including blockchain, AI, VR, AR, etc...) that have a massive network of followers and would be able to attract users to our community.
- ➔ **Experts / Interlocutors:** not so well-known people but interesting providers of content to our community.
- ➔ **Early adopters:** including beneficiaries from our open calls, or external parties, namely SMEs and start-ups that can showcase how they are applying these technologies in real life or business (i.e. what Materials Zone do with AI).

Belonging to one category would not exclude others, i.e. you can be at the same time one early adopter + expert + influencer, or 2 out of those 3 categories at the same time. For example, a CTO from a start-up which has a lot of followers (influencer) and also a very good technical content provider of the community

1.4.3.5 Ambassadors Selection Criteria

NGI ambassadors are all **renowned and recognized profiles** in the Digital industry, Internet, Research, Political, Activism and Business sectors, with an exact and proven influence on the Internet. Ambassadors are **experts, with a clear reputation, proven expertise and connections** with companies, universities, governments and the leading start-up ecosystem in strategic countries in Europe and with a proven previous experience in Internet in the specific business and technical areas of: Strategy & Biz Model, Product development, Marketing & Sales, internationalization, Finance & Funding, Management, Legal and Technology

During their implication as ambassadors they will:

1. **Post on a regular basis on their social networks** about the different aspects of the NGI initiative,
2. **mentioning and describing the initiative in any event** they may be invited as speakers
3. being **active members in the NGI Insight platform providing relevant contents.**

The **criteria to homologate those ambassadors** who stand for joining the programme:

- ➔ **Global business vision and solid expertise** in the entrepreneurial, politics, activism or research sectors, i.e., as former successful entrepreneurs, company founders, political leaders, NGO activists, etc
- ➔ **Vertical experts**, with a clear reputation, proven expertise and sectoral connection in the Internet landscape.
- ➔ **A relevant presence and pull of followers** in social networks and active participation in events

The expansion of this repository will be achieved by leveraging on the project and the partners' presence in events and by contacting directly by mail with other relevant communities with whom partners' does not currently have contact, but who could potentially be interested in communicating the project value proposition to the organizations linked to them.



1.4.4 LIAISING STRATEGY

1.4.4.1 About NGI Community Platform Liaising Strategy

Liaison strategy outlines how the NGI initiative in general, and the NGI Community in particular, will **collaborate with entities identified in the community mapping**.

For the collaboration to be fruitful, we need to create a **win-win situation** where entities asked to join our community feel they will get something valuable in return and, hence, are motivated to contribute to project dissemination.

1.4.4.2 Value proposition for collaboration

As far as we will ask such entities to act as multipliers, helping us increase the outreach of our activities and ensure potential leads come from beyond our immediate networks, we will offer them in return:

- ➔ **Visibility** on our community, website, newsletter and our social media channels.
- ➔ **A chance to showcase success stories** and share content on their own activity in the Next Generation Internet domain.
- ➔ **Opportunities to reach collaboration agreements** for joint presence at events and to co-organize info sessions.

Those entities which join to collaborate will be **periodically contacted** to maintain their involvement and supply them with communication materials to make NGI communication actions easier for them. **Entities not joining** after the first invitation will be sent a **reminder** afterwards. **New entities identified or contacted** through networking after first invitation actions, will be invited following the identification or the event where initial contact was made.

1.4.4.3 Invitation to collaborate and ecosystem activation

A set of **template messages to communicate with those entities** will be provided to project partners to help them make the first contact. This will include specific messages per entity type and main interest as stated in the liaising order proposition.

Those messages will take into account the **potential interest identified initially** and will be reviewed (and updated, if needed), after contact of the initial community mapping and under the light of information and collaboration demands and content shared.

Entities willing to join and collaborate with the project will be asked to express their commitment in an online form, which will include at least:

- Name of the organization, logo, website and social media,
- Contact for communication (name and mail),
- Permission to receive information from NGI,
- Interest in sharing information with NGI ecosystem and corresponding permission.
- Accepting the terms of NGI Privacy Policy.



Interest and commitment of entities collaborating with NGI will be maintained by **periodic communications with the aim of making easier for them to communicate about the project and the Community Platform activities**. These communications will be based on a communication package prepared for each milestone with the support of partners and consisting of suggested banners, social media posts and stories to share with their networks online, in printed media and via their newsletters.

In addition, some **collaborating entities will be encouraged to share content** for dissemination so that the community as a whole would benefit from channelling all information into one place. Content can include, for example:

- Success stories.
- Recent breakthroughs and advances in Next Generation Internet.
- Opportunities: calls, events, competitions, etc.

1.5 ANALYTICS FEATURE

We will follow up the impact of communication actions in project dissemination and, in this last case, we will also track its impact in community building, to watch for the project to reach its Key Performance Indicators in terms of dissemination and also to search for potential improvements and implement corrective actions if needed.

As specified in the project DoA, NGI4ALL has impact in different areas, which we are going to track every 6 months, and analyse how the community platform is contributing to reach these communication KPIs (i.e. peak community activities vs increase of these KPIs):

1.5.1 Social Media and Networking Strategy

- ➔ Members of NGI LinkedIn Group – 10861 followers: 5% increase
- ➔ Number of new Twitter followers – 2093 followers: >800
- ➔ Number of new views in total in YouTube channel - 30 subscribers | 28 videos | 1769 total views: >1500
- ➔ Number of new Facebook followers – 50 followers: >400
- ➔ Number of new Instagram followers – 108 followers: >400

1.5.2 Portal (Website)

- ➔ Number of visits / unique visitors: >3000
- ➔ Number of pages visited: >5000
- ➔ Average duration of visit: >1'30"
- ➔ Number of news published: >30
- ➔ Number of file's downloads: >1500

1.5.3 e-Newsletter and e-newsflashes

- ➔ Number of newsletters published: 4
- ➔ Number of newsflashes: 12+
- ➔ Size of the target audience – 736 subscribers:>500

Other metrics to include, using platform analytics tools⁴ that will contribute to measure the attractiveness and dynamics of the community platform are:

- ➔ Number of visits to the landing page.
- ➔ Number of sign-ups and of members.
- ➔ Number of visits to the different Spaces and Collections.
- ➔ Most viewed and highly engaged contents, meaning they generated a reaction and/or a comment.
- ➔ Other engagement metrics of the community, like percentage of visits during the last 30 days. This is a new feature to come and is currently a work in progress in the IT department in FundingBox.

⁴ FundingBox platform is currently using MixPanel, but other tools like Google Analytics can be also made available.



2 NGI COMMUNITY GROWTH HACKING PLAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following sub-section addresses in detail the **methodology and activities behind the Task 3.2 Growth Hacking Funnel** of NGI4ALL:

*[...] The objective is to create a dynamic community where synergies are found and where content and crucial information is gathered. The goal is to convert the deal-flow of applicants in active users within the community, by **following a growth hacking plan** to achieve the highest distribution of contents with minimum budget. Strategies included in the **growth hacking approach** include: writing posts related to web sites and blogs that are already a reference for the Internet innovation community, such as TechCrunch; addressing specific people via Twitter through a trigger (e.g. a direct message to representatives of an SME that could apply to Open Calls); making direct references to researchers and innovators that may be interested in Open Calls. This will be organized by:*

- **Attracting users:** Using spaces with a large propagation and sharing of information “pills” to attract people to the NGI community platform. [...].
- **Activating users:** to ensure users are active, an onboarding process (customized call to action e-mails) will guide them from the very beginning. Additionally, specific calls to action, acting as a funnel that will push the users to the content, features and services that better fit their profile will be run. [...].
- **Retaining users** through combined activities of the NGI PILOT, NGI INSIGHT and NGI SHAKE⁵ by building on top of services offered through the NGI community platform, such as access to Open Calls, matchmaking, funding readiness, and regular and catching updates from influential experts (including the NGI4ALL Advisory Board representatives and the NGI Interlocutors) and active members of the community. [...].

2.1.1 What is Growth Hacking

“Growth hacking is a process of rapid experimentation across marketing channels and product development to identify the most efficient ways to grow a business.”⁶ According to what Wikipedia definition, **growth hacking** refers to a set of both conventional and unconventional

⁵ NGI PILOT, NGI SHAKE and NGI INSIGHT refer to WP (Work Packages) 1, 3 and 4 respectively of NGI4ALL project:

WP1, NGI PILOT. Strategy and governance will steer communication and marketing across the NGI community for broad reach a large mediatic impact, integrated by dedicated coaching to all NGI stakeholders. Close interaction of WP1 will be ensured with all other WPs so as to align on both strategic and operational aspects necessary to run the NGI Outreach Office effectively.

WP 3, NGI INSIGHT. Providing Meaningful and Actionable Insights invigorates the dialogue with all relevant stakeholders to grow, shape, strengthen and sustain the NGI ecosystem. WP3 interacts with all other WPs and have great exposure to the NGI ecosystem (and not only) reaching out to researchers and innovators at work to build a better Internet of the future.

WP 4, NGI SHAKE. Increasing visibility, reach and impact aims at building a strong reputation and global visibility on the human-centric Internet debate, via a combination of dedicated online and offline activities through a 360 degrees approach. WP4 interacts with all other WPs and have great exposure to the outside media (and not only) audience.

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Growth_hacking



marketing experiments to expand a business. Accordingly, marketers, engineers and product managers work as growth hackers to build and engage the user base of a business **using low-cost alternatives** to traditional marketing, like social media, viral marketing or targeted advertising, instead of buying advertising through more traditional media such as radio, newspaper or television.

The main goal of growth hacking is **rapid growth at an early stage** of a product or service by increasing the conversion rate and lowering the cost per customer acquisition, although **the customer retention is a key point** of any successful growth hacking strategy. As Mason Pelt points out in a 2015 article on SiliconANGLE.com, "The goal of any marketing should be long-term sustainable growth, not just a short-term gain. Growth hacking is about optimization as well as lead generation. Imagine your business is a bucket and your leads are water. You don't want to pour water into a leaky bucket; it's a waste of money. That's why a true growth hacker would care about customer retention."⁷

Pelt remarks the importance of **using the data available**, from industry trends to internal analytics, to find areas in a company's marketing that will yield the greatest impact. With needs in mind, form a hypothesis of what the solution will look like, he suggests to design a test, analyse the results and implement the most impactful changes. "Most of the time growth hacking is leveraging both psychology and systems", he adds, as he highlights how "a simple change to the images on a website has improved conversions" or how "a truly great email subject line is as important as any email automation software."

Growth hacking is part of the online marketing ecosystem because growth hackers use techniques such as search engine optimization, website analytics, content marketing, email campaigns, viral strategies and A/B testing. But it can also involve online community management and social media outreach, both through organic content and paid ads, and influencer marketing.

Moreover, apart from digital marketing techniques, **the product development is also heavily influenced** by the growth hacker mindset. Growth hackers start user testing with wireframes and sketches, validating ideas at every stage, according to the Wikipedia.

Going back in history, Sean Ellis coined the term "growth hacker" in 2010 in a blog post in which he defined a growth hacker as "a person whose true north is growth. Everything they do is scrutinized by its potential impact on scalable growth"⁸; meanwhile Andrew Chen introduced the term to a wider audience in a blog post titled, "Growth Hacker is the new VP Marketing"⁹. He wrote that growth hackers "are a hybrid of marketer and coder, one who looks at the traditional question of 'How do I get customers for my product?' and answers with A/B tests, landing pages, viral factor, email deliverability, and Open Graph." In 2012, Aaron Ginn defined a growth hacker on TechCrunch as a "**mindset of data, creativity, and curiosity**."¹⁰

⁷ <https://siliconangle.com/blog/2015/11/02/what-the-heck-is-growth-hacking/>

⁸ <http://www.startup-marketing.com/where-are-all-the-growth-hackers/>

⁹ <http://andrewchen.co/how-to-be-a-growth-hacker-an-airbnb-craigslist-case-study/>

¹⁰ <https://techcrunch.com/2012/09/02/defining-a-growth-hacker-three-common-characteristics/>



Every growth hacking strategy follows a funnel:

- ➔ **Acquisition.** The main goal is to lower the acquisition cost of users, and for that a growth hacker has to answer the question ‘How does your target find you?’, to focus the brand awareness strategy on the platforms the target audience¹¹ is (which social media networks, blogs and online magazines, which online communities and groups, etc.).
- ➔ **Activation.** Once the target has been acquired, it has to be activated, which means the key performance indicator of this step of the growth hacking funnel is the conversion rate. For that, it is important to answer the question ‘Does your target have a great first experience?’, which in the case of the NGI online community would mean ‘Do they join the community?’.
- ➔ **Retention.** Retention focuses its efforts on creating active users or members of a community on a daily, weekly or monthly basis by offering some added value to enlighten them. In the case of a customer, the objective would be that they buy again and again, but in this one, that they become active members. The question that summarises the retention would be ‘Does your target come back?’
- ➔ **Revenue.** Completed the three previous steps, a growth hacker has to answer the question ‘What is your business model?’ to make the business profitable -but this is not the case of NGI online community.
- ➔ **Referral.** Last, but not least, if a growth hacker has implemented a successful strategy, users, members or customers will spread the word and tell others to help the user base grow organically, although there are also some techniques to encourage them to do it.

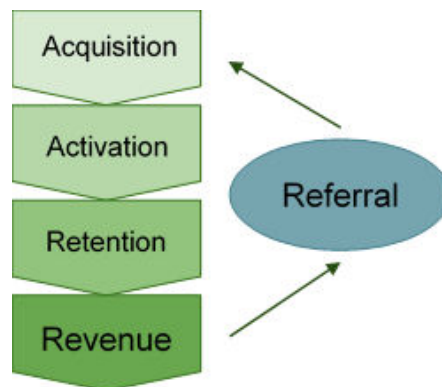


FIGURE 6: GROWTH HACKING FUNNEL

2.1.2 What is Inbound Marketing Methodology

According to HubSpot¹², inbound marketing is focused on attracting members through relevant and helpful content and adding value at every stage in the attraction and conversion journey. With inbound marketing, potential members for the NGI online community will discover our platform through channels like blogs, search engines and social media, among many others.

¹¹ **Target audience:** A target audience is an audience most likely to convert; relevant users, members or customers according to their interests and online behaviour to whom a particular message or advertisement is aimed.

¹² <https://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing>



Unlike outbound marketing, inbound marketing does not need to fight for your target attention, because by creating content designed to address the problems and needs of your ideal target, you attract qualified prospects and build trust and credibility for your brand.

The inbound methodology has four steps to convert strangers into promoters, as shown in the figure below:



FIGURE 7: INBOUND MARKETING METHODOLOGY ACCORDING TO HUBSPOT

These four phases (Attract, Convert, Close, Delight) that turn strangers into visitors, leads, customers and promoters become even more powerful when implemented with sales and customer success strategies.

- ➔ **Attract.** This phase focuses on attracting strangers to make them visitors through digital and content marketing techniques for a targeted and relevant audience. It consists of spreading the right message or content to the right audience at the right time and platform. For that, social media, blogging, sponsored articles¹³ and influencer marketing¹⁴ are very important.
- ➔ **Convert.** Once you have attracted website visitors, the next step is to convert those visitors into leads by opening up a conversation in whatever way works best for them – with messages and emails, forms or even meetings. Once they are leads, the focus of this phase is to interact with them and provide them with relevant content to retain them, as well as to organise their contacts in a database.
- ➔ **Close.** It is the moment to transform those leads into customers, members of the NGI online community in this case.
- ➔ **Delight.** The main goal of inbound marketing is providing a remarkable experience for your customers to make them come back. That is why the first experience they have and the content offered is so important, because if the previous phases of the inbound

¹³ **Sponsored article:** A sponsored post, also known as a promoted post, is a post to any community-driven notification-oriented website which is explicitly sponsored as an advertisement by a particular company in order to draw a large amount of popularity through user promotion and moderation to the most active or most viewed page on the website.

¹⁴ **Influencer marketing:** Influencer marketing (also influence marketing) is a form of marketing in which focus is placed on influential people with a big community of followers rather than the target market as a whole. It identifies the individuals that have influence over potential buyers, and orients marketing activities, as sponsored content, around these influencers.

marketing methodology have been implemented successfully, they will be active in the community and also refer their friends, so they will eventually become promoters.

2.2 NGI4ALL GROWTH HACKING PLAN METHODOLOGY

The NGI Community Platform growth hacking plan aims to build the largest online community about the Next Generation Internet initiative in Europe. It has been structured following the growth hacking funnel explained above. But at the same time, the four main phases of the inbound marketing methodology have been integrated in the growth hacking funnel, with its correspondent techniques and actions described below.

It is important to note that the 'Revenue' step of the funnel has been removed, because it is not the aim of the NGI online community to become a business, that is why it doesn't have a business model. Instead, this online community aims at spreading the word about NGI initiative in a fresher way to strengthen its brand awareness, disseminating the success stories and the experiments (i.e. meaning early adopters of these technologies and beneficiaries of NGI open calls for example), as well as at increasing the applicants for the NGI initiative open calls. All this will help to enhance the earlier adoption of Next Generation technologies by the European SMEs and mid-caps.

A first draft of the growth hacking action plan is described following. Furthermore, this action plan will be continuously and lively (i.e. excel or Google Drive format spreadsheet) updated and tailored to the main actions to be done by each partner during each reporting period namely:

- D3.2.1: Growth hacking activities and NGI Ambassadors Programme report (from M4 to M12)
- D3.2.2: Growth hacking activities and NGI Ambassadors Programme report (from M13 to M24)
- D3.2.3: Growth hacking activities and NGI Ambassadors Programme report (from M25 to M36)

Each action is described and assigned to a partner to be completed at the right time to guarantee a successful performance. The platforms and tools to be used are also explained in this first draft, as well as the campaigns, targets, KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and main goals.

On the other side, this action plan will be reviewed after a dissemination strategy workshop with other partners. The aim of this four hours workshop will be to structure a very practical, clear and action-driven growth hacking plan following its funnel (acquisition, activation, retention and referral) to create brand awareness, attract members to the NGI online community and to convert them and engage them to make them active contributors and promoters of the community.

The session will be a practical workshop based on partners brainstorming focused on best practices and strategies to develop a solid growth hacking plan for the community. The idea of this meeting will be to learn from each partner experience and skills following the growth hacking action plan created by FundingBox.



Participants will be divided into three teams with members from different partners per team to give feedback, comments and suggestions, as well as to do a brainstorming session. The attendees from FBOX, MARTEL and TIPIK will be asked to share best practices and successful strategies according to their experience.

The main conclusions of this workshop will be integrated in the growth hacking plan explained below and conveniently updated in the “live” action plan (i.e. shared Google Drive spreadsheet described above). However, the **main assumptions at this stage before official launch of the community are the following:**

- ➔ The first content has to be **relevant to convert and retain members**. That is why it is very important to focus on the message and adapt it depending on the target group.
- ➔ Another assumption is that the official launch of the community should be postponed with a press release and advertising campaign once there are **some early adopter members in the community** who have joined through personal email invitation in order to improve the user experience to enlighten new members.

The results and conclusions of this training will be described also in the **D1.2.2 NGI Comms coaching report**, due by FBOX in M24 and which is indeed addressed to describe the coaching activities made by FBOX around the community platform.

2.2.1 Partners: Profile and Main Tasks

Regarding the partners involved in the growth hacking strategy actions, those will be FundingBox, as the leader of the strategy, followed by MARTEL and TIPIK, considering the complementarities and roles of each involved partner as a whole in the project management structures, as follows:

- ➔ The **lead and coordination of the project**, including all strategic and cross-programme interactions should be managed by a person well established in NGI and sharing its vision, aware of the current status and plans for evolution, in short able to represent the NGI Brand and impersonate it. Such person and its organisation should have as well a consolidated expertise with H2020 projects, including CSAs specific dynamics and Open Calls mechanisms, complementing it with strong diplomatic, managerial and interpersonal skills, which are core to convincingly and successfully guide, encourage and coordinate all stakeholders engaged into the promotion and growth of the NGI programme. In this respect **Martel**, which will engage and commit to drive the NGI Outreach Office at the service of the whole NGI community, under the lead of Director, **Dr. Monique Calisti**, who will continue ensuring her experience, skills and never-ending energy, is the ideal NGI4ALL coordinator.
- ➔ The **lead of branding, communication and marketing tasks**, including a mix of offline and online professional services from PRs to advert campaigns, events and much more, should be led by a team of skilled and specialised people, gathering professional copywriters, PRs coordinators, creative teams, social media and web experts, events’ organisers, video makers, etc. The lead here is with **Tipik (in charge of WP2 and WP4)**. But with strong support in several tasks from the Martel Media team (in charge of NGI portal, NGI Online Map, NGI social media, NGI storytelling, Social media engagement, etc.)
- ➔ The lead of **community engagement and “market” research analysis** that will inject into the strategic and operational activities at the service of the NGI stakeholders and invigorate meaningful dialogues across the research and innovation landscape by



- 1) Attracting newcomers especially via support to NGI Open Calls promotions and
- 2) Ensuring mapping of and liaisons with related initiatives, should go to people / organisations that have reach and visibility into the future Internet R&I scene in Europe and beyond will be led by **FBOX (in charge of WP3) with strong support from Martel dedicated at leading Task 3.3** aimed at sustaining liaisons and a continued, content-rich debates.

2.2.2 Personas Profile

One of the first steps, before defining any InBound Marketing Strategy (i.e. NGI COMMUNITY Platform Growth Hacking Plan) is to work on the **definition of Personas Profile(s)**.

Personas are **fictional characters**, which you create based upon your research in order to represent the **different user types** that might use your service, product, site, or brand in a similar way, in this case the NGI Community Platform.

Creating personas will help you to **understand your users' needs, experiences, behaviours and goals**. Creating personas can help you step out of yourself. It can help you to recognise that different people have different needs and expectations, and it can also help you to identify with the user you're designing for.

Personas make the **design task at hand less complex**, they **guide your ideation processes**, and they can **help you to achieve the goal of creating a good user experience** for your target user group.

For this reason, the Growth Hacking Plan of NGI, rather than focusing on "features", should first describe what we would like to be the **overall "story" of how the NGI Community works, taking into account the different "services" (i.e. what NGI initiative has to offer as a whole, and what NGI Community Platform offers as specific service)**.

Following, we start **drafting some "personas" as preliminary exercise to guide as toward a common goal that will then be translated into functionalities and processes in the Community Platform and will inspire the Growth Hacking Action Plan as well**, including:

- ➔ **Newcomers:** Members that just sign-up to the community and acquire a regular member status with basic privileges as posting content on the Spaces, reacting and commenting on other posts, and contacting and chatting with other members.
- ➔ **Community Members:** They keep the community alive. They post, react and consume the content that is published in the community.
- ➔ **Ambassadors:** They increase the community of NGI, raise its awareness and visibility and enhance the connections of its members.
- ➔ **Community Manager:** Responsible for creating and managing the online voice of NGI to build brand awareness within the community. Creates Spaces and Collections and proposes types of content. Works with Ambassadors.



2.2.2.1 Newcomers

2.2.2.1.1 Newcomer persona description

Greta (fictional name) heard about NGI at a conference, she got a nice flyer with the portal address. When she arrives on the portal finds out that NGI is made of people and that she can be part of NGI community.

She reads a page with the benefits and she thinks that's cool, she decides to register. When she registers, she is guided through the creation of NGI profile:

- General questions about name, e-mail, etc...or activities that may be interesting for her (areas of interest, technologies, etc...)
- Yes / No to subscribe to NGI newsletter
- Do you want to register an organisation in the NGI Map? Or is your organisation in the NGI Map?

Now she is a member of the NGI Community and thanks to that can access the different services:

- Community Spaces general access
- Newsletter subscription
- Eventual registration of her organistaion on the NGI Map

2.2.2.1.2 Actions towards this persona by NGI Community Platform manager(s)

- ➔ Define the benefits to be presented to the new comers.
- ➔ Define a solution that allows to have a single profile for the different tools in place or that may come.

2.2.2.2 Community members

2.2.2.2.1 Community member persona description

Marc (fictional name) is a researcher who already knows about NGI, went through the portal and joined the community after clicking on "Join NGI Community Platform". He is a quite active professional in the AI area and is willing to discuss a topic about. As a member of the community, he can enter the *community spaces*. In the community spaces he can join existing discussions and create new ones. Discussions can lead to collaborative creation of content and other users will help Marc to gain insights in the AI area. If the topic discussed is not appropriate, he can signal it to the community managers, that will verify and act accordingly.

- Participates in the design of topics, under request of moderators / community manager / ambassadors
- Publish and reacts to contents
- Content consumer, including services like Helpdesk or Q&As
- Generates and shares content to participate in community interactions.

Additionally, Marc, can **collaboratively create new contents, and start new discussions** in the AI area. As a community member he wants to share content created by him, with other members and eventually create this content with other members of the community. For



example, he knows about an interesting event, and wants to make the community know about it. He posts the event info to a proper space in the community and discussion is triggered around it. Thanks to such content creation, he can get recognized in the community space and NGI may give him visibility through the portal.

2.2.2.2.2 *Actions towards this persona by NGI Community Platform manager(s)*

- ➔ Define which content can be “collaboratively” created (i.e. general member role or pro member if the community platform managers identify him as interesting eventual Ambassador)
- ➔ Define the process through which the moderation of such content occurs.
- ➔ Define how the “benefit” of giving visibility to content creator is presented to the community.

2.2.2.3 **Ambassadors**

2.2.2.3.1 *Ambassador persona description*

Michael is an influencer in the area of Machine Learning and has an active participation in social media exposing his knowledge regularly with an active pool of followers in Twitter and LinkedIn. Thus, as mentioned in the first part of this document, Michael is someone who should be targeted as a person with a great capability to:

- ➔ **Disseminate:** he has access to people, communities and contacts we do not, so he can disseminate information through his networks.
- ➔ **Create brand awareness.** he is recognized for a specific topic or area related to Next Generation Internet, so his recognition contributes to generate brand awareness of the NGI community and program.
- ➔ **Provide content:**
 - he joins the community and provides content from his experience, work, and networks, all related to Next Generation Internet, on a regular basis;
 - he should be available for 1 or 2 Q&A sessions.

2.2.2.3.2 *Actions towards this persona by NGI Community Platform manager(s)*

- ➔ Define how the “benefit” of becoming ambassador is presented.
- ➔ Defining the best possible roles to the ambassadors listing
- ➔ Defining the on-boarding process of ambassadors
- ➔ Define the process through which the ambassadors will participate in the community according to their different profile

2.2.2.4 **Community Manager**

2.2.2.4.1 *Community Manager persona description*

The NGI Community Platform Manager should be a dynamic and preferably digital native and active person working on the dynamization of the community platform that is aimed at scouting



and curating content, work actively with content caretakers and publish the most featured content, namely events and open calls.

- ➔ **Scout content from the community for the official portal:** as user can create content in the community, and wants to make sure that the most interesting content is also made available in the portal. He scouts the different channels for that, and once the content is found, he gets in contact with the creator to discuss how to promote it.
- ➔ **Curating content and agree on the process (which is fine to be manual):** The content that is published in the community should meet minimum criteria in order to comply with community standards.
- ➔ **Agree on the caretakers:** caretakers support keeping an eye on the content that is published in the community and the interactions happening there. In this sense the community manager works on hand with caretakers that contribute to control the type of content and interactions happening in the community.
- ➔ **Publish events from the official portal:** as a Community Manager he visits frequently the NGI portal and looks for events that are relevant to publish within the community.
- ➔ **Publish open calls from the official portal:** as a Community Manager he visits frequently the NGI portal and looks for open calls that are relevant to publish within the community.

2.2.2.4.2 *Actions this persona should take care of (Internal Manager of the Community Platform)*

- ➔ **Scout content from the community for the official portal**
 - Define a set of channels to scout content.
 - Develop the criteria to identify what is interesting content.
 - Select interesting content.
 - Contact sources for promotion.
 - Define and implement promotion actions of that content.
- ➔ **Curating content and agree on the process (which is fine to be manual)**
 - Establish a process to review, curate and approve content that is appropriate for the community.
 - Identify the type of content that is needed to support the process.
 - Select the content.
 - Have the content as reference.
 - Implement this process.
- ➔ **Agree on the caretakers**
 - Identify and contact caretakers.
 - Make agreements with caretakers.



- Monitor activities of caretakers.

➔ **Publish events from the official portal**

- Schedule regular visits to the NGI portal and coordinates with Martel in contents.
- Select interesting events to publish in the community.
- Publish the events.

➔ **Publish open calls from the official portal**

- Schedule regular visits to the NGI portal and coordinates with Martel in contents.
- Look for open calls to publish in the community.
- Publish the open calls.



2.3 GROWTH HACKING ACTION PLAN

2.3.1 Acquisition - Attract

The first phase of the growth hacking funnel focuses on acquiring members, which means to attract them according to inbound marketing. It is the first contact a stranger is going to have with the product, so it is important to develop some actions to create some brand awareness and trust to make that stranger become a visitor:

➔ **PR Campaign.** A strong press release (PR) strategy will be a key point to create brand awareness and attract members. “A press release is a written communication that reports specific but brief information about an event, circumstance or other happening. It’s typically tied to a business or organization and is provided to media through a variety of means.”¹⁵ For that, there will be an official launch campaign with a press release in English and in the language of the key countries (Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Poland and the regions and countries where there is an already existing a broader implementation of NGI technologies, as well as NGI Research and Innovation Actions and CSAs). Project partners will distribute it, but a PR Agency will be hired where needed to spread the word in the most relevant countries according to NGI objectives, in order to be relevant and known. The frame of the PR will be fresh and catchy, using the testimonials of success stories to attract the press, as well as the hook of the open calls.

Apart from the launch PR, there will be more press releases distributed to the press regularly in order to keep the word about NGI in the media during all the months of the project.

A media kit with logos and corporate images will be prepared to distribute to media, as well as flyers and merchandising for offline events. Moreover, we will disseminate NGI YouTube channel available videos.

This Media Kit will be prepared by TIPIK as coordinator of NGI SHAKE (WP3) and coordinated with FBOX as community platform manager.

- ➔ **Branded content and banners in specialized media.** To complement the PR campaign, and in order to reach a more relevant target impossible to reach through general media, we will reach out to specialized newspapers, magazines and blogs to negotiate sponsored articles and/or banners that we will pay for. However, to do this organically, we will close cross promotion partnerships through the signature of Memorandums of Understanding (MOU).
- ➔ **Influencer marketing.** With exactly the same aim of the previous action, the influencer outreach main goal is to create brand awareness reaching a specific target through influencers with big communities of followers on social networks. For that, it will be necessary to negotiate partnerships with them to spread the word about NGI online community signed through an MOU, or as **part of the Ambassadors Programme** collaboration, described above, where one of the assigned roles will be Influencer.
- ➔ **Bloggng.** A blog is a very good way to attract new visitors to a website. In order to get found by the right future members of NGI online community, a blogging strategy will be created to spread the right message through educational content that speaks to them and

¹⁵ <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-a-press-release-3515529>



answers their questions. This action shall be coordinated with MARTEL, as responsible of the **NGI portal publications strategy**.

- ➔ **Mailing.** An email to a massive database of contacts gathered by the project partners will be sent to get the first members of the community, also to the partners' already existing resources (databases and newsletters). There are three main targets to reach in the first wave: ambassadors, NGI RIAs and SMEs that already know NGI (they can be beneficiaries). This target will become the first members of the NGI online community, that is why we will fill their profiles for them.

Moreover, an email will be sent to contacts from SMEs databases like Amadeus¹⁶ (Europe) and Sabi¹⁷ (Spain and Portugal).

We will also send the NGI monthly newsletter, elaborated by MARTEL, while we grow our contacts database.

- ➔ **SEM (Search Engine Marketing).** Because our target is online, and they usually do some research to find something they have questions about, we need to make sure we are showing up when and where they search. AdWords¹⁸ campaigns are a way to gain visibility and become more relevant, which means that it is a good tool for this purpose.
- ➔ **Social Media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook).** A social media strategy will be developed combining organic content and paid ads (on Twitter and LinkedIn) to reach a target audience relevant in the Next Generation Internet industry application areas. Social media allows to share that valuable information, engage with your prospects, and put a human face on the brand. Besides, it helps to Interact on the platforms where the target spends their time. We will inherit existing Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, already active and working around NGI initiative.
- ➔ **Offline events.** Partners will attend relevant events at a regional, national and international level to spread the word about NGI in a face-to-face way. For that, flyers and merchandising will be distributed, as well as leads will be captured to convert them into members of the community through personalised follow up emails if they don't sign in in situ. Partners will also apply to pitch and be on stage in info sessions and other events for SMEs.
- ➔ **Open calls.** The dissemination of open calls will be used as a hook to attract the press in order to publish our press releases, but also to attract new members to join the NGI online community. Actions on social media, the blog and the newsletter will be done to promote these open calls within our network.

2.3.2 Activation - Convert

Once a stranger has landed into our page and already knows our community, the main goal is to **convert** them, in this case **into members of the NGI online community**. For that, it is necessary to do the following actions to make them sign in and to gather their emails to convert them into leads:

- ➔ **Landing pages - Forms.** To convert strangers into leads it is very important to create attractive landing pages with appealing information about NGI online community (easy to

¹⁶ <https://amadeus.bvdinfo.com/version-20171221/home.serv?product=AmadeusNeo>

¹⁷ <https://sabi.bvdinfo.com/version-2017126/home.serv?product=SabiNeo>

¹⁸ **AdWords:** Google AdWords is an online advertising service developed by Google, where advertisers pay to display brief advertising copy, product listings, and video content within the Google ad network to web users.



read, understand and navigate): clear concept message, reasons to join the community, images and call to action button in order to motivate newcomers to join the community. Furthermore, the registration process will be easy and intuitive, with the possibility to be done through Facebook and/or LinkedIn. In order for visitors to become leads, they can fill out a form and submit their information.

- ➔ **Call to action.** To convert the visitors and increase the possibilities for them to join the community, it is very important to have attractive and very visible call to action buttons to subscribe to the newsletter and join the community, as Hello bar, Pop ups, AB Testing, E.g.: Message inviting to join the community on the helpdesk.
- ➔ **Mailing - Contacts.** All the contact emails will be gathered to organise them in lists to adapt the messages spread depending on the target. Having all the data in one place helps to make sense of every interaction you've had with your contacts and optimize your future interactions to more effectively attract, convert, close, and delight your ideal members.
- ➔ **Remarketing**¹⁹. Remarketing campaigns are used to convert the target that already knows NGI, but hasn't converted yet, which means they are not members yet. The main tools to do remarketing are mailing, social networks and AdWords.
- ➔ **Helpdesk.** The helpdesk can be used as a call to action to invite members to join the community in the form of a pop-up message when the visitor first arrives to the website. This way, they would see the message and the invitation to join the community, increasing the chances of getting new members.
- ➔ **Workflows.** It is a key point in any growth hacking strategy to study where the traffic comes from to understand the performance of the actions and campaigns to improve the results. This means that the actions or platforms that are driving traffic to the NGI online community and attract new members would be discovered, to focus the growth hacking efforts on them, while rejecting those which are not being effective. For this purpose, it is necessary to use some analytics tools, such as MixPanel, Google Analytics and FBOX Gear (internal engine which includes analytics features as described in Section 1).

2.3.3 Retention - Delight

If that visitor has converted, now he/she is a **lead**, but in this phase, it is important to **delight the new member of the community to retain** him/her and make him come back to be an active member. That is why it is crucial to offer added value in the community, a hook that keeps the interest of the new member, so he becomes an **active user** on a regular basis:

- ➔ **Mailing.** To make sure we retain members, we will onboard them through an email process consisting of the following emails:
 1. Welcome email with little survey about the content they are looking for in the community and the reasons why they joined -we need to know what they are looking for. Two questions, 3-4 answers. Survey done in less than a minute.
 2. Second email 3 days later explaining what the community is about and how to use and explore Spaces.
 3. Third email 7 days later to list the reasons and benefits of joining NGI online community.

¹⁹ **Remarketing:** Remarketing shows ads to people who've visited your website or used your mobile app. When people leave your website without buying anything, for example, remarketing helps you reconnect with them by showing relevant ads across their different devices.



Also, to re-engage members who haven't been online for a while, reminders will be sent:

1. If a user hasn't been online for a week, a reminder email will be sent inviting to login, using the hook of a success story.
2. Weekly summary emails will also be sent with the highlights of the community.

Besides, we will also send emails promoting the actions to add content value that we organise through cross promotion partnerships (personalised calls to action like specific offers for specific users: open calls, webinars and Q&As with Ambassadors and Influencers, etc.). This way we will keep mailing conversations to understand their needs and to inform them about what is going on in the community.

According to this onboarding process, we also consider calling the most relevant members to have quality conversations with them to understand what they want.

- ➔ **Surveys.** Following the previous action about an email onboarding process, we will also prepare survey emails to send to the community members to get feedback about their user experience and the content provided.
- ➔ **Content.** The content is the key added value of this community²⁰, the main hook that will keep a member interested in login to the community again, in order to make him come back to become an active user. It will consist of the following:
 - Funding readiness (open calls).
 - Market events, highlight those we are attending to network.
 - Webinars, Q&A sessions from leading agents, curators and influencers -digital transformation evangelizers that will provide us with exclusive content through cross promotion partnerships closed in MOUs. For that, we will identify the new members joining the community and create tags for them on Spaces to reach out to them proposing them to create content in exchange of promotion within our network. We will do the same action with external agents, such as influencers.
 - Offer and demand main platform of the NGI ecosystem in Europe (matchmaking based on tags).
 - NGI RIAs & Early Adopters Club members success stories, technologies.
 - Helpdesk.
 - Policy.
- ➔ **Social Monitoring.** Social media networks (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook) will be used to share content, interact with our users and get feedback.

²⁰ The community manager of the platform will be a person assigned by FundingBox, the main content provider and partner in charge of dinamize the community. However, a close work with MARTE and TIPIK will have to be done to close monthly content plans for the community, making sure certain actions are done to add value and retain members.

2.4 REFERRAL

Last, but not least, the referral phase. If all the previous steps have been done successfully, the members of the community should be the ones making the community grow organically by inviting their peers, but to encourage this, it is necessary to facilitate this task and to incentivise them through some actions. From the product side, a button will be implemented to invite friends to join the community. Moreover, there will be some incentives:

- ➔ **Free consulting/training** hours for most active members-partnerships will be closed with accelerators, corporations, experts, etc., through MOUs.
- ➔ **Feature most active members** in our community. We will give them visibility in the community microsite as 'Ambassadors', as well as we will mention them in our newsletter and social media for them to gain visibility. We can even consider to interview these ambassadors to share their profile on social media. Members will also have an expertise status on their profile as on LinkedIn or TripAdvisor.
- ➔ **Launch of contests.** We will launch contests to motivate members to invite friends, but we will also do it if we beat our targets and get the number of members, we are willing to get.
- ➔ **Prizes & Awards.** We will offer a fast track to the NGI awards and we will allow the members of the community to vote and have voice selecting the winner.

2.5 GOALS

The main goal is to get **~15,000 members in the NGI online community** by the end of the project (December 2021). Split by type of actors, the following have been listed:

- 2,000 researchers, both academics and corporate, registered to the NGI Community platform.
- 6,000 highly competitive start-ups and SMEs registered to the NGI Community Platform.
- 2,000 connections established in the NGI Community Platform on one to one basis
- 30 influencers engaged as ambassadors.

Moreover, for each action developed during the growth hacking action plan, there will be some targets to reach agreed with the partner in charge of the task.

2.6 TARGETS

The aim of this growth hacking plan is to get a dynamic online community filled with different profiles, which means a variety of targets to reach. We can consider two groups of targets:

- ➔ **First wave:** Startups, SMEs and midcaps, RTOs (competence centres and technology institutes), **NGI RIAs and CSAs**, regions, European networks (e.g. Enterprise Europe), national/regional platforms, **aggregators of SMEs** (clusters at regional level, associations, tech parks, chambers of commerce), corporates, IT facilitators, researchers, **SMEs who participated in previous open calls, early adopters club members, and influencers** (ambassadors, people creating content for the community).
- ➔ **Second wave:** Investors, training providers and funding experts.



However, before the official launch of the community with the PR campaign, we will send emails to **three main targets** that we want them to be early adopters to form a pilot community, that is why we will adapt the message we send them, differentiating three campaigns and collaborations:

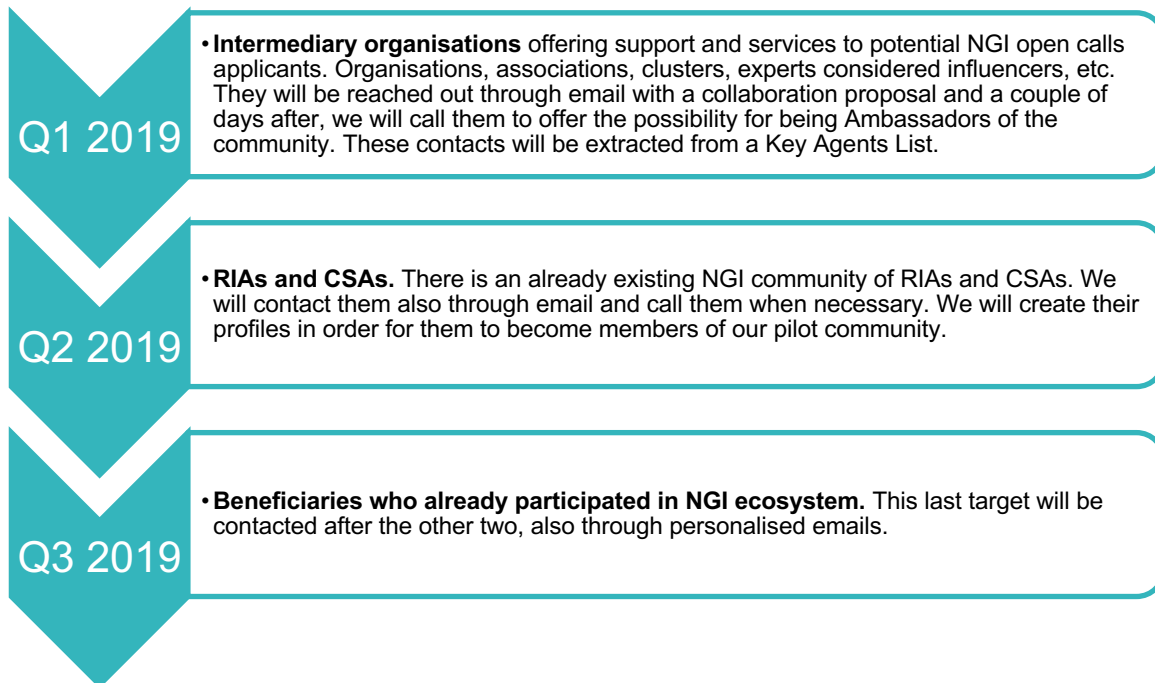


FIGURE 8: TARGET AUDIENCE CAMPAIGNS

These three targets will be exclusive members or early adopters (i.e. first users) to start building the NGI online community. We will help them filling their profiles. The message will be adapted depending on the target.

After this action carried out in three phases, an email campaign will be scheduled to get mainly startups and SMEs willing to apply to the NGI open calls during 2019 summer period, as well as progressively the rest of targets. Once the community has these members, the official launch will be done. The message of the launch will be focused on the main five success stories -the rest will be disseminated later on during the rest of the project through different press releases and other communication actions- and the dissemination of the three first NGI RIAs open calls wave, used as a hook to attract members.

2.7 METRICS AND KPIS

Every growth hacking plan has certain metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to prove the success of the actions and campaigns done to achieve the objectives. During all the funnel of the growth hacking plan, three main analytics tools (Google Analytics, MixPanel and FundingBox Gear) will be used to track where the traffic is coming from and how the actions and campaigns to attract users are performing.

According to this, the main KPIs of this growth hacking plan is the community members, but there are some other indicators taken into consideration as well. Below there is a table with the KPIs and targets to reach in this growth hacking plan until the end of December 2021:

KPI	TARGET
Community Members	15.000
Daily, weekly and monthly active users (DAU, WAU, MAU)	15% DAU
Churn ²¹	<50%
CPA ²²	€5 per user
Leads	50.000
Social Media followers	30% increase
Impressions/Reach	60M impressions (press, social media, events, etc.)
Website visits	250.000

TABLE 2: GROWTH HACKING KPIS AND TARGETS

²¹ **Churn:** The churn rate is a measure of the number of individuals or items moving out of a collective group over a specific period. It is one of two primary factors that determine the steady-state level of customers a business will support. Churn rate is an important input into customer lifetime value modeling, and can be part of a simulator used to measure return on marketing investment using marketing mix modeling.

²² **CPA:** Cost per acquisition (CPA), also known as "Cost per action" or pay per acquisition (PPA) and cost per conversion, is an online advertising pricing model where the advertiser pays for a specified acquisition - for example a sale, click or form submit (e.g., contact request, newsletter sign up, registration etc.). In the case of the NGI online community, for member to join it.



2.8 ACTION CALENDAR

All the actions and campaigns to be done during all the phases of the growth hacking funnel have been gathered in a Growth Hacking Plan Action Calendar, in which each partner can find the task described and the deadline or period of the project where it has to be done. However, as described above an **Excel / Google Drive live spreadsheet will be created and regularly updated to follow-up this action plan**, in order to adapt it to partners' availability and match these actions namely with foreseen schedule of NGI initiative as a whole (i.e. actions promoted by EC, or by RIAs / CSAs around NGI).

FUNNEL	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	WHEN	PARTNER
ACQUISITION Attract	PR Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a press release in English to distribute to media. - Translate the PR to the languages of the key countries (Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Denmark, Poland, etc.). - Use the general NGI media kit with logos, images, etc. for the community - Make use of NGI available flyers and merchandising and specifically prepare NGI Community Platform materials. - NGI available YouTube channel videos spread in the community 	H1 2019 (Launch) 2019-2021 (Q basis)	MARTEL / TIPIK
	Branded Content/Banners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a list with specialized media relevant to NGI Initiative and related technologies (newspapers, magazines, blogs). - Negotiate sponsored article prices or cross promotion partnership. - Banners 	List: Jun 2019 Contacts: Jul 2019 Sponsored articles and Banners: 2019-2021 (Q basis)	MARTEL / TIPIK / FBOX
	Influencers and Ambassadors Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a list of relevant influencers and Ambassadors around NGI with a community of followers on social media (Twitter and LinkedIn) - FBOX. - Reach out to them on social media sharing an article about them/their job posted in our blog - FBOX. - Reach out to them on social media inviting them to check NGI - FBOX. 	List: April 2019 Reach: May-Jun 2019 Posting & Reaching out: 2019-2021 (Q basis)	FBOX / TIPIK



FUNNEL	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	WHEN	PARTNER
	Blog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use our blog as cross promotion platform for others (RIAs, CSAs, corporates, SMEs and mid-caps, other specialized blogs, etc.) to publish their content in exchange of them promoting NGI on theirs -this partnership can include posts on social media and promotion in the newsletter. - PRs can be content for the blog. - NGI educational content (FBOX or MARTEL first blog post in May 2019) 	1st post: May 2019 Regular posting: 2019-2021 (once a month)	MARTEL / FBOX
	Mailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion in NGI initiative partners newsletter and databases. - Personalised emails to RIAs and CSAs (create profile and register), RTOs, researches and SMEs who participated in previous NGI open calls as first target to join our community. - List of contacts (key players list, influencers, etc.). - Newsletter - MARTEL. 	2nd half 2019	All
	SEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AdWords campaigns (mkt agency/freelancer). 	2nd half 2019	FBOX / TIPIK
	Social Media (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic content: work on a social media plan - TIPIK. - Paid Social: LinkedIn campaigns - Twitter. 	2nd half 2019	TIPIK / MARTEL
	Offline Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a list of relevant events (international, national and regional). - Prepare flyers and merchandising to distribute them to attendees and in the venues. - Gather contacts in those events to create databases. - Send them personalised follow up emails about NGI open calls and community through SendGrid. - Info sessions -slots in other events for SMEs. 	2nd half 2019	MARTEL / FBOX
ACTIVATION Conversion	Landing Pages Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attractive landing pages with clear information about NGI (easy to read, understand and navigate): text, images, call to action button. - Highlight the added value of NGI community with an appealing message. 	May-Jun 2019	FBOX



FUNNEL	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	WHEN	PARTNER
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write reasons to join the community to motivate new members to join. - Include testimonials on our website to build trust and relevance (previous beneficiaries of the program, success stories, someone from the EC, etc.). - Easy and intuitive registration/application process -fast and as few steps as possible. - Community: possibility to register through LinkedIn, Facebook. 		
	Call to Action	- Buttons to subscribe to a newsletter, join the community, apply for an open call. Hello bar, Pop ups, AB Testing, E. g.: Message inviting to join the community on the helpdesk.	May-Jun 2019	FBOX
	Mailing - Contacts	-Gather all the contacts converted and organise them in lists (newsletter, community, applicants).	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
	Remarketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remarketing campaigns. - Remarketing tags on the website. 	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
	Helpdesk	- Use the helpdesk as a call to action to invite members to join the community.	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
	Workflows	- Study where the traffic comes from to understand the performance of the actions and campaigns to improve the results. Analytics tools: MixPanel, Google Analytics, FBOX Gear.	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
RETENTION Delight	Mailing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smart/personalised calls to action like specific offers for specific users: open calls, webinars and Q&As with influencers, etc. - Email onboarding strategy. - Personalised calls to action to the most relevant and active users. 	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
	Surveys	- Survey emails sent to the community members to get feedback about their user experience and the content provided.	May-Dec 2019	FBOX
	Content (key added value)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding readiness (open calls). - Market events - highlight those we are attending to network. - Webinars, Q&A sessions from leading agents, curators and influencers digital transformation evangelizers 	May-Dec 2019	FBOX / MARTEL



FUNNEL	ACTION	DESCRIPTION	WHEN	PARTNER
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer and demand main platform of the NGI ecosystem in Europe (matchmaking based on tags). - RIAs, CSAs, and success stories, technologies. - Helpdesk. - Policy. 		
	Social Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use social media networks (LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook) to share content, interact with our users and get feedback. - Use these interactions for reshaping social media content. 	May-Dec 2019	FBOX / TIPIK
REFERRAL	Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Button to invite friends from inside the community to grow organically. 	May - Jun 2019	FBOX
	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Close partnerships with accelerators, corporates, experts, etc., to offer free consulting/training to the most active members. - Feature most active members in our community, newsletter, social media for them to gain visibility. Ambassadors NGI, profile interviews to share on social media. Ambassador profile in the community microsite. - Launch of contests: the member who invites more friends gets a prize. 	May-Dec 2019	FBOX / MARTEL

TABLE 3: NGI GROWTH HACKING ACTION PLAN CALENDAR



3 CONCLUSIONS

NGI Community Platform aims to be the **unique online community of the Next Generation Internet ecosystem in Europe**.

It offers a solution to a current **problem**: the ecosystem has a central point of information which is the NGI Portal (access gate), but **doesn't have a dynamic space of interaction** able to gather all the key agents participating in the promotion of Next Generation Internet technologies. That is the value of NGI online community.

To make it grow fast and reach the target of 15.000 community members by December 2021, it has been decided to implement a **growth hacking strategy following the growth hacking funnel** (acquisition, attraction, retention and referral), and at the same time, integrating the inbound marketing methodology phases (attract, convert, close, delight).

Several actions and campaigns will be carried out according to these methodologies, as well as platforms as a blog, social media networks and email will be key tools to develop the strategy to **attract newcomers at a low cost**, without forgetting spreading the right message to the right target audience. However, the goal is also to **retain the new members**, and that will be done by offering them exclusive content only available on NGI online community in order to get an active, vibrant and thrilling community.

Project partners will closely work together to coordinate the actions and make sure they get the best performance. Using the **Growth Hacking Plan Action Calendar** as a guide, the tasks, targets and objectives will be organised and updated as the project moves along, always analysing the data to optimise the campaigns.

As a final objective, the **online community also aims at spreading the word about NGI** in a fresher way to strengthen its brand awareness, disseminating the success stories and the experiments / early adopters / open calls beneficiaries experiences, as well as at increasing the applicants for the NGI open calls. All this will help to enhance the **adoption of NGI technologies** by European Industry, start-ups, SMEs and mid-caps as well as the general society as end-users of these technologies.



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APPENDIX A

FundingBox vs Other Community Platforms

FundingBox platform

FundingBox designed its platform according to the needs found for projects and initiatives to build communities and ecosystems around their projects. Under the concept of transforming static websites in dynamic communities the platform was developed to provide a unique space where conversations and knowledge can be gathered. It has experienced several iterations along the last years. Feedback from hundreds of users have been collected and new features and functionalities has been developed in order to offer a tool ideal to build up communities around projects and initiatives. In order to achieve this feedback, FundingBox uses two sources of information:

- ➔ **A FundingBox Beta Community programme** (<https://spaces.fundingbox.com/c/fundingbox-beta-program>) where user can make feature requests, ask for improvement of users experience, report bugs, etc...
- ➔ **Regular surveys launched to the overall community every 3-4 months** via mailing to FundingBox users (last one available report includes answers from 193 users and the next one will be launched for the period May-July 2019).

On the basis of a chat base real time community platform FundingBox have developed a new version of what can be considered "*the next generation of community building tool*". The core of the proposition is to build a crowd knowledge base repository and a dynamic and lively community. The platform gathers functionalities from Quora, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Reddit or Zendesk in one easy to use and customise platform. They main differentiation against any other similar product is the focus on being a place where the knowledge is gathered and shared. All the elements of the platform, the live chats, the matchmaking, the funding opportunities, the groups; everything turns around the features specifically built to generate knowledge for and by the crowd. FundingBox is the only existing platform specially focused on building a real-time community where the knowledge for the crowd is collected and maintained in repositories of knowledge, so whenever any user joins, they have all the knowledge accessible through a couple of clicks.

The last version of the platform has three layers a front, a back end and mobile apps:

1- Spaces: the front end, includes on-line communication features to foster interaction among NGI COMMUNITY members. It provides the features for organising and managing private or public real-time communications. These chats can be presented as help desks; forums; live chats; or working spaces for teams. From this initial version and based in users feedback a more comprehensive version has been developed adding the following features to the platform:

- **Crowdsourced Help and Support:** Through a specific "Questions and Answers" section, the users will be able to ask a question to the crowd, with anyone being able to provide an answer. This feature is similar to a forum where specific questions are highlighted and where the conversation is open to obtain more refined answer.
- **Content sharing:** so, every user is able to drag and drop content that may result relevant to the community. This content will be highlighted and kept in an easy to access repository.



- Matchmaking networking tools. This matchmaking will work in a way where each user will receive according to their interest's potential profiles of people with similar interests making easy for them to connect and hold one to one conversation. Through this matchmaking tool the user will also be able to: discover peers through interactions or searching in the members directory and contacting peers and chatting with them on one to one basis
- Crowdsourced Knowledge base. We are promoting the collection of knowledge providing a space where "articles" can be written as posted, being the administrator able to highlight those more relevant for the community.

So in brief, the user have 3 ways to get support: 1 -Crowdsourced help - Where the user can search for already asked/solved questions or ask a new one; 2 -Direct Support via chats with the community support staff other community members; 3 -Getting access to the shared knowledge base, where the user will have access to some support articles and FAQs

The new solution will be open for the expanded community, but in particular national nodes of the NGI4ALL Assembly will be requested to use these features to build their networks, to channel their communications and to share their information. FBC will adjust this section to facilitate the development of shared documents and its storage, or the availability of real time chats.

2- Gear: this layer provides the features for community management and open call management. It allows tracking every event (click) that happens within the **community**. This is the engine for creating a community of communities and matchmaking services that includes: dashboard; customer engagement analytics; open call builder, including on-line evaluation; community builder; web page builder; communication management. It allows to create customize web sites within the platform, so a given **NGI Innovation Action** can create its own landing page including calls to action for the user, like: polls; open calls; matchmaking services; help desk; forums; and others. All the **NGI4 initiatives and Innovation Actions** will be given access to this tool and requested to publish their calls to action and on-line events, using this platform. Other DIHs from the extended NGI ecosystem, will be invited to create their own NGI communities and/or calls to action. FBC will adjust the generic resources of this section to adapt them to the requirements of NGI4ALL.

3- Mobile apps: based on user feedback we learnt of the importance of providing mobile apps to make the communities more dynamic. The apps for Android and ios devices are already available.

Why FundingBox platform

There are several software solutions in the market that could overlap in some aspects with the one provided by FundingBox but they are all partial, in the sense that they just cover one aspect of what can be considered crucial to build a community. In our experience each community has certain requirements and can be built in several ways. FundingBox offers to the administrator the possibility to customise the community adding the features desired but putting the emphasis in the crowd knowledge base approach, where the users are the players providing most of the knowledge and gaining the benefits.



Platform	Description	Why FundingBox
F6s	“F6S is the world's largest platform for founders. We enable founders to interact with Investors, Accelerators/Incubators, Products/tools, Talent on the platform to grow together”	F6s is a great platform to launch challenges and open calls but it is not designed for community building
Mobilize	“All-in-one community management platform. Everything you need to build and manage a thriving community your members will love”	The most similar to FundingBox platform is focused in one entity building a community mostly for business profit. FundingBox focused on creators, innovators, entrepreneurs and researchers and is based on a set of features to create a community led and used by the users not by corporates, this is why we use what we call a set of crowd knowledge features to empower users. Furthermore, fundingbox curates an offer funding opportunity and includes the software to launch and manage open calls and challenges
Slack	“Where Work Happens. When your team needs to kick off a project, hire a new employee, deploy some code, review a sales contract, finalize next year's budget, measure an A/B test, plan your next office opening, and more, Slack has you covered.”	Slack is team work tool that is being also used to build up communities but it is not designed for that purpose so it is basically a live chat that make possible to create conversations. It lacks all the features required to keep and consolidate knowledge for the crowd. At FundingBox you can set a showroom, access to matchmaking directory, publish articles, make announcements or create Question and answers. Furthermore, to access this groups you need an explicit invitation
Riot	“Create, shares, communicate, chat and call securely and bridge to others apps.”	Riot is an open sourced software used to build live chats and communication channels but it doesn't go beyond that. It is not designed to collect and gather knowledge for a community. FundingBox is focused on this approach where generating knowledge for the crowd is key
Whatsapp and Telegram	“Simple. Secure. Reliable messaging. With WhatsApp, you'll get fast, simple, secure messaging and calling for free, available on phones all over the world.” “Telegram is a cloud-based instant messaging service.”	Messaging apps like Telegram and WhatsApp are great for private groups but they don't make possible to create public groups. Telegram has certain focus on communities but it's poorly designed to gather knowledge and works more like a real time forum for real time information.
Basecamp	“All growing businesses run into the same fundamental problems. Hair on fire, buried under email, stuff everywhere. The good news? Basecamp solves them. ”	As other team software is designed for project management purposes so it optimized the internal way of working of organizations but it is not for external communities

TABLE 4: FUNDINGBOX VS OTHER COMMUNITY PLATFORMS

