

ShipStation

- ShipStation is an online shipping solution for eCommerce systems. They needed a way to cultivate community, engage customers and provide support.

- ✓ Gamification
- ✓ API integration
- ✓ Social media integration

Case Study- SHIPSTATION

Background

Founded in 2011, ShipStation was created to fill a need that wasn't well served in the eCommerce industry. It is a web-based shipping solution that streamlines the order fulfillment process for online businesses. ShipStation's greatest advantage is its ability to integrate with marketplaces and eCommerce systems such as eBay, Amazon, Etsy, Paypal, Shopify, and BigCommerce. This has led to immense growth in the past year, during which it has added to a customer base of over 3,000 online retail stores and processed over 1 million shipping labels monthly.

The Need

Erika Jarvi, the Social Media and Content Manager at ShipStation, previously worked in a company that is an advocate for using forums to build communities. Because ShipStation has a varying client base, she wanted a solution that would allow their clients to talk to each other and give advice to one another. She was also looking to build out a Support Community.

What's the best way to ship something 13 oz. or less?

Answered ✓ 1 view 1 comment new Most recent by October 26

ShipStation uses an API to connect Vanilla with their support dashboard which allows them to include community content in search results.

"Our clients don't have to go through our ticketing system, they can help each other out, especially the easy questions and opinion questions like 'What kind of label printers do you use?', which is actually one of our most popular threads right now!"

The Decision

The main reason that drew ShipStation to Vanilla was the "Gamification" features such as Badges/Reactions and Ranks.

"These features have really helped us create a community where people want to come back and really connect on that awesome personal level. We really care about customer engagement. It's not so much how many people we have, it's how many people can we make happy."

The Feedback

Erika created this [YouTube video](#) for all new users to illustrate the forum features available. As soon as ShipStation launched their Vanilla forum, they received positive feedback from their "regulars." Users telling them that "This is such a great idea!" and "I'm so excited to be able to talk to other customers and share information!."

What are the next steps for ShipStation's forum? "I would love to see the community keep growing, so that more of my day is talking to our clients to make sure they are happy and doing what they can for their business."

The Cool

ShipStation is getting creative with Vanilla. They are motivating their users to participate by giving out rewards based on the user's Ranks and Points. The forum also has launched a contest to "Vote for your Favorite Office Decorations & Win a Free Month's Subscription!" by using their Facebook page photo album and using the Polls features of Vanilla to tally up the votes. The result? An increase from 100 users to over 400 users in just one week!

GET REWARDED
on the community forums

The Ranks:

Rank	Points	As you...
An Exceptional Counsel	1000 points	chat
A Distinguished Advisor	500 points	give feedback
A Savvy Individual	250 points	collaborate
A Regular Do-Gooder	125 points	badges
A Usual Suspect	50 points	points
A Fresh Initiate	Start Here!	discounts

The Ranks Details:

- An Exceptional Counsel:** 25% monthly discount + Signatures + Polls
- A Distinguished Advisor:** 10% monthly discount + Signatures + Polls
- A Savvy Individual:** 5% monthly discount + Signatures + Polls
- A Regular Do-Gooder:** Can customize Signature + Polls
- A Usual Suspect:** Can post Polls
- A Fresh Initiate:** Posting, commenting, comraderie

Easy Ways to Get Started:

- Upload a photo + 5 points
- Name-drop @username + 5 points
- Comment on a post + 2 points

Badge rewards scale with their difficulty. Here's some examples:

- Have 50 promoted posts + 30 points
- Get 500 "Agree" Reactions + 50 points
- Get 100 Accepted Answers + 50 points

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forums.shipstation.com

promotions subject to change