



INSIGHTS FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS  
INNOVATION FOR YOUR COMPANY

# KLC Online Community Service Levels Explained

Many of you already know what an Online Insight Community is, but for those who don't, it is a destination where you can foster a collaborative relationship between you and your customers, so you can tap into their needs and bring the right solutions to life on an ongoing basis. For the longest time there were just two options for service for these Insight Communities:

- **Full Service:** you work with a partner who manages all aspects of your community from research design to fielding/moderating, through analysis and reporting,
- **Do-It-Yourself or DIY:** you basically rent a platform to run your community on, but you are responsible for everything else.

Recently, though, there is an increasing desire for something in between Full Service and DIY. What this comes down to is that clients don't necessarily want DIY, but they also don't want the cost of Full Service.

To meet this, market research firms have started to offer different levels of service - you may have heard terms like, Full-Service Light, Hybrid, Flex, DIY sometimes, and even more.

They all mean basically the same thing: a service model that is more than a bare-bones DIY option, but less than the full package where – for a premium – the research firm does everything from soup to nuts (within the confines of the product, platform, or service they provide, of course).

The semantics of it all, though, is enough to confuse even the most experienced of clients. To help you understand what each level of service entails, read on.

## **Do-It-Yourself (DIY)**

Do-It Yourself is self-explanatory. A company works with a vendor who offers a community platform only- with minimal technical support. It is up to the company to run all aspect of the community from setting up the community, recruiting, member engagement, incentive management, all content creation, analysis, - you get the point.

## **Full Service**

Full service is probably also self-explanatory. A company is interested in conducting consumer research via an online insight community and wants a partner to manage and run the

community for them. The client provides their overall objectives and then the research partner oversees the research design, content creation, implementation of all projects, both qualitative and quantitative and conducts the final analysis

### **Service That's Somewhere In-Between**

Unlike Full Service and Do It Yourself, Flexible Service provides you with an in between option. Many Market Research companies that offer this type of service will clearly lay out what they will be responsible for and what you will be responsible for. For example, a community manager or other research associate works with you to program and administer your research initiatives and you moderate and analyze the data with your internal team.

### **Flexible Service at KLC**

At KLC this is a little trickier – we believe Flexible Service should be just that – flexible and can ebb and flow as needed. One size does not fit all. Instead, we allow you to ramp your service up or down as needed; you can draft, conduct, and analyze the research on your own, or delegate certain aspects of the field or analysis phase to your community manager.

You can pivot for each project if needed – sometimes you may have the time to do it all yourself, but something you may need help with content creation, moderation, reporting, or something else. We aim to give you the best of both worlds – and really can provide the best value for your money by doing so.

Some may ask how that works with a contract. For this type of agreement, we tend to work on a credit system – you purchase a certain number of credits at the get go - so you are only paying for what you need and again get the best value for your research dollars.

### **But What is a Hybrid Model?**

There are many agencies who use the term Hybrid when talking about service levels for an Insights Community, usually in reference to a Flexible model. At KLC we don't think of Hybrid as a level of service for our online insight communities.

Rather we use the term hybrid when designing our activities – in essence it refers to the ability to mix and match methodologies to meet the objective/s of a project. Most community platforms offer a variety of methodologies, but typically you pick one per project.

Hybrid instead allows you to use multiple methodologies to meet your research objective. You can mix and match when needed – you might do quick survey followed by a one-on-one qual activity or you might run a forum discussion following by a live chat, etc. This hybrid approach allows you to better answer your research questions without being locked into a specific methodology.

## Which Service Level is Best for You?

Once you have made the commitment to start up an Online Insights Community, key questions to ask yourself when deciding which level of service is right for you include:

- What is the budget?
- Who will be managing the community internally and how many people can devote their time to it (this can really be the main driver of choosing DIY vs. Full Service vs. Flex Service)?
- What is their research background versus marketing background?
- How active/busy do you think the community will be? Can internal staff manage the workload required?

Once you can clearly answer those questions and have an understanding of the different types of service models and how they may be defined, you should have a better understanding about which service level is right for you. Be honest with yourself.

So many people “want” a DIY option as it is the least expensive, but as the saying goes, cheaper isn’t always better. Often, the more cost-effective model is the one that frees you up to meet your other responsibilities while providing you with quality, robust insights.

If you want to learn more about the different service levels available, reach out to KLC. We will help you answer those key questions and get you on the right path to understanding your customers.

## KLC Contact Information

**Address:**

130 Maple Ave  
Building 7, Suite 7B  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

**Phone:**

(732) 224-9991

**Email:**

[inquiry@klcommunications.com](mailto:inquiry@klcommunications.com)

**Website:**

[www.klcommunications.com](http://www.klcommunications.com)