

# Ultra Light Startups

July 2011

*Building a Valuable Online Community*

Twitter: #ultralight

[ultralightstartups.com](http://ultralightstartups.com)



# Case Studies

Mashable, Etsy, Forrst, MediaBistro.com

- Metrics (# of members, % active, daily traffic)
- The story of the community. What made it work? What makes it different from clones/wannabes?
- What makes it a community? What are people discussing?
- What is the format/platform? Where/how are people communicating (posting, commenting, etc)?
- What makes it valuable? What is the revenue model?

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# Success Factors

- The leader's personality?
- A compelling topic? (a narrow topic? A broad topic?)
- The technology platform (social media API's?)
- In-person community to complement online community?
- Seeded content / pump priming?
- Celebrity members/contributors?
- Discounts?
- Game dynamics (leaderboards, points, badges)?
- Community Managers?

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# Community Revenue Models

- Membership
- Advertising/sponsorship
- Affiliate revenue
- Pay-to-post (job boards, directory profiles)
- Events/conferences
- Sponsored posts (Mashable: BizSpark, Gist)

Failed community revenue models. What didn't / doesn't work?

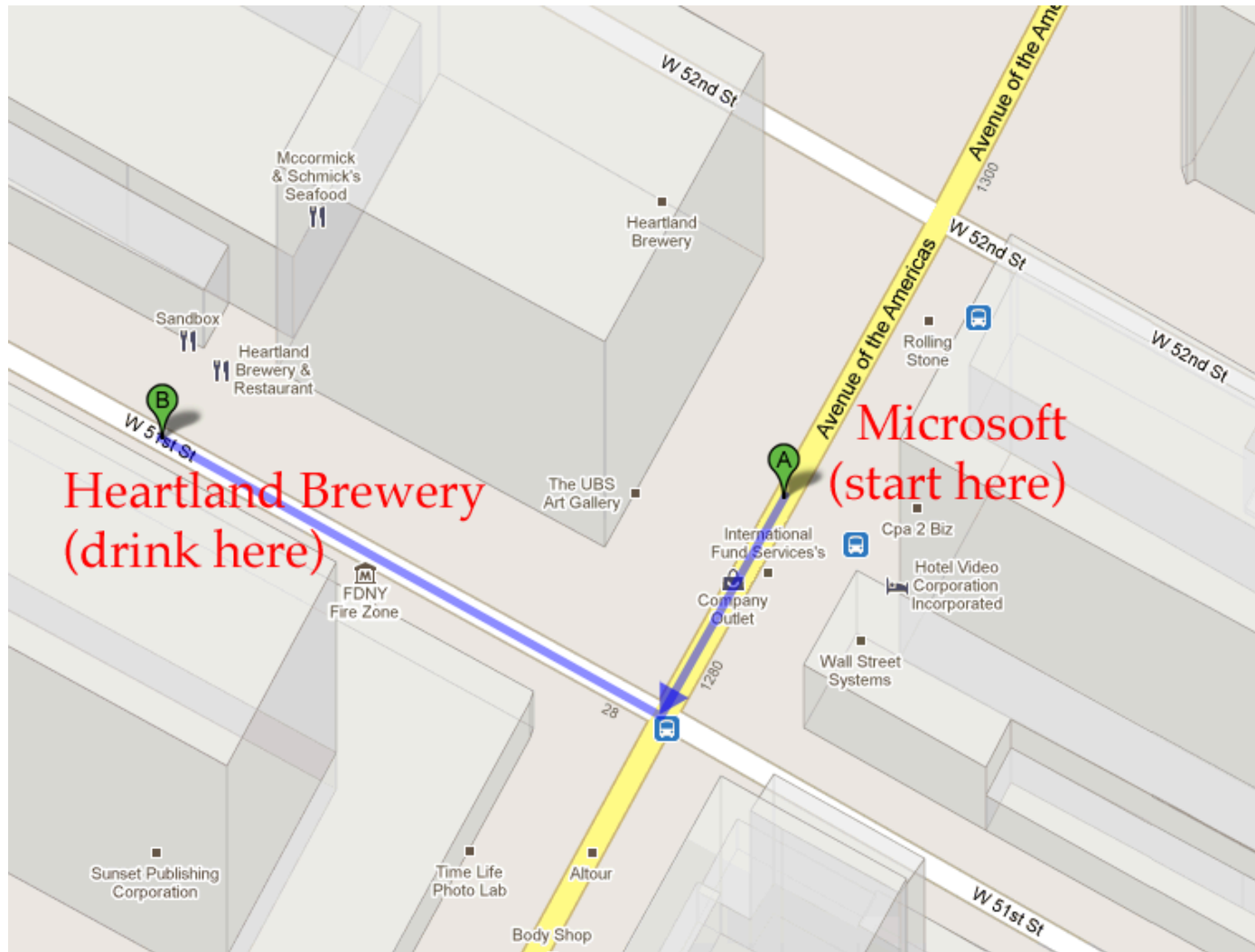
# Scaling / Growing Pains

What is the “critical mass” threshold?

What changes after critical mass?

- Technology
- Process
- Tone / management

# Drinks afterwards at Heartland Brewery



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# Asking Questions

Do

- About 10-20 words long
- Ending in a question mark

Don't

- No statements
- No background
- No follow-up questions

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