Congress/Medium: Boehringer-Ingelheim internal blog - guest blog post

Title: Nurturing connections: the Impact of R @ AZ community at AstraZeneca

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Blog Post:

We initiated the community of R users at AstraZeneca in early 2021, with one goal:

Federate the R users in our organization

Very quickly, it became apparent that there was significant interest and traction. As we embarked on building this community in the same way as Kevin Kunzmann at Boheringer-Ingelheim, questions naturally arose:

What is the value of R @ AZ?
What would be an appropriate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for R @ AZ?
What is the Return On Investment (ROI) of R @ AZ?

Initially, we struggled to answer these questions. My first thought for a KPI was the number of members in the Workplace (our internal social media) group dedicated to R @ AZ, as depicted in the graph below. If this were to be a KPI, the success of R @ AZ would be unquestionable.
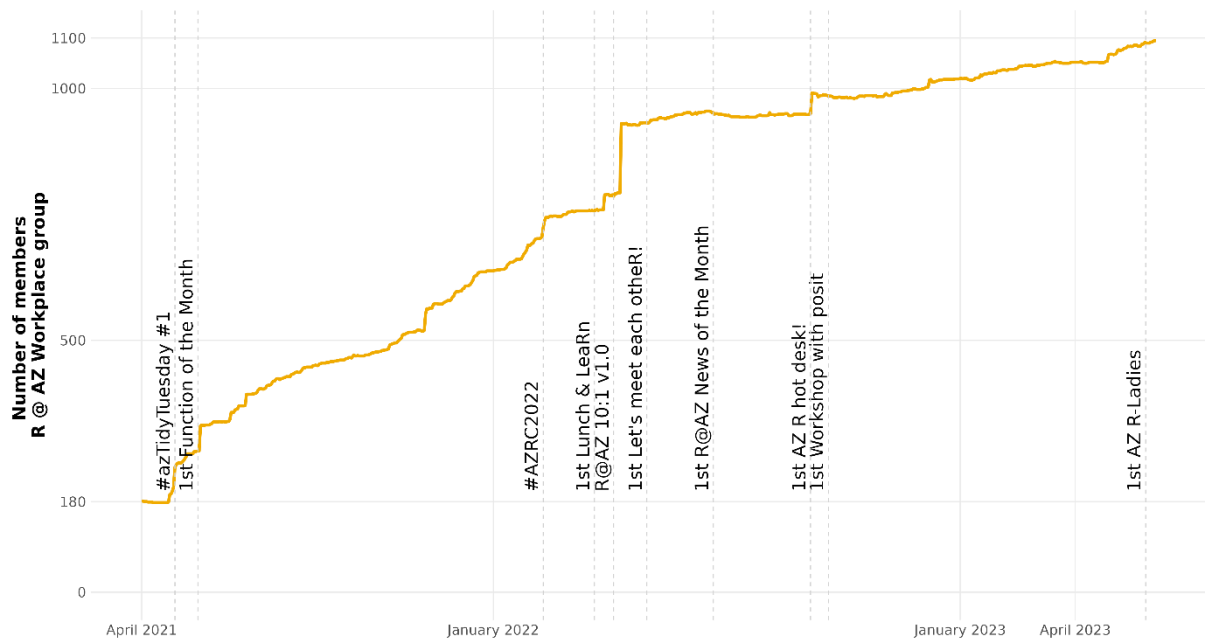
Actually, this is not quite a KPI: the growth in the number of members in the Workplace group could be influenced by factors beyond the control of the R @ AZ steering committee. We continued to search for a KPI that the steering committee could directly impact. We considered the number of active members in the R @ AZ Workplace group. Could that be a better KPI?
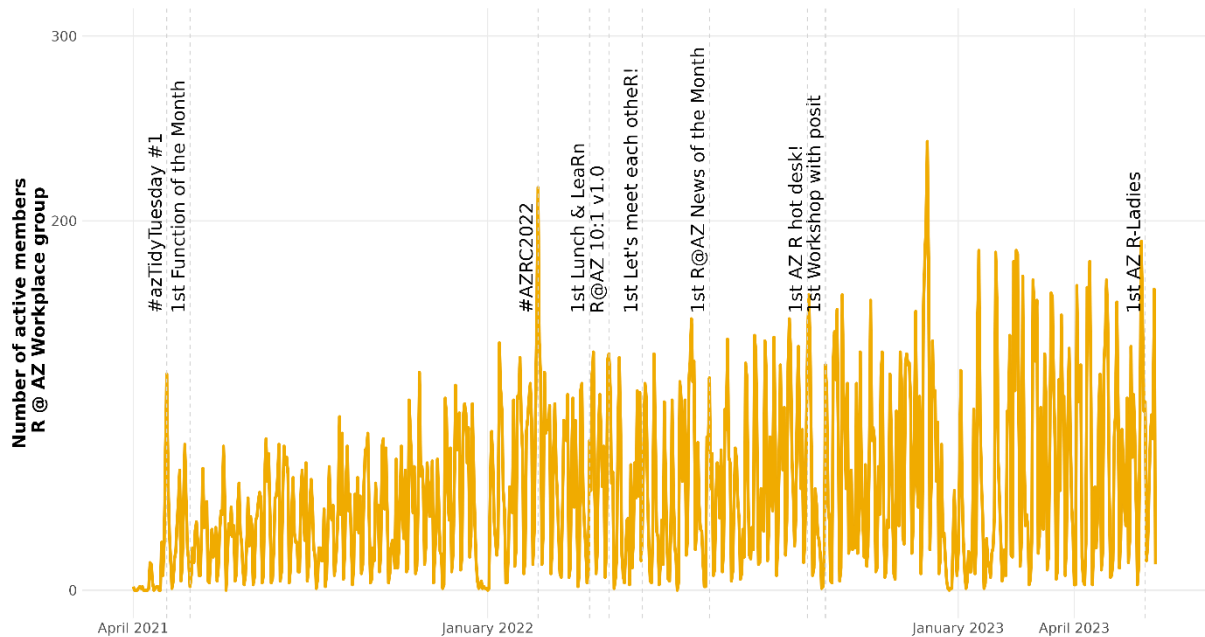

This metric proved too volatile and indirect as well. We kept looking for a KPI and it then became very clear: the number of ongoing R @ AZ initiatives would be the ideal KPI.

To ensure inclusivity and diversity, the R @ AZ steering committee developed initiatives that cater to different learning preferences, ranging from self-led learning to more independent learning, and events with varying degrees of synchronicity, i.e. ones you will be able to catch up on and others you won't.
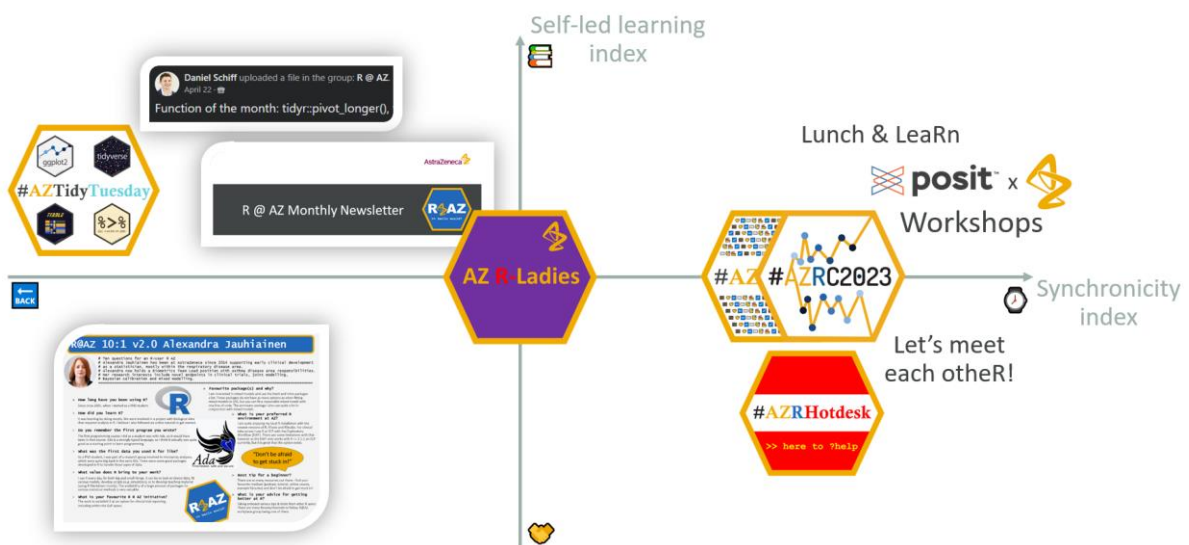
Now that we have identified an R @ AZ KPI, the question about ROI remained. Some months ago, we were looking for a Subject Matter Expert on the *rpact* package. A senior stakeholder approached me

and another collaborator at AstraZeneca, but neither of us considered ourselves experts in *rpact*. But I knew that I could leverage the power of the R @ AZ community. I then typed a message in our AZ R Hot Desk Teams chat, a tool that is used to ask R-related questions.
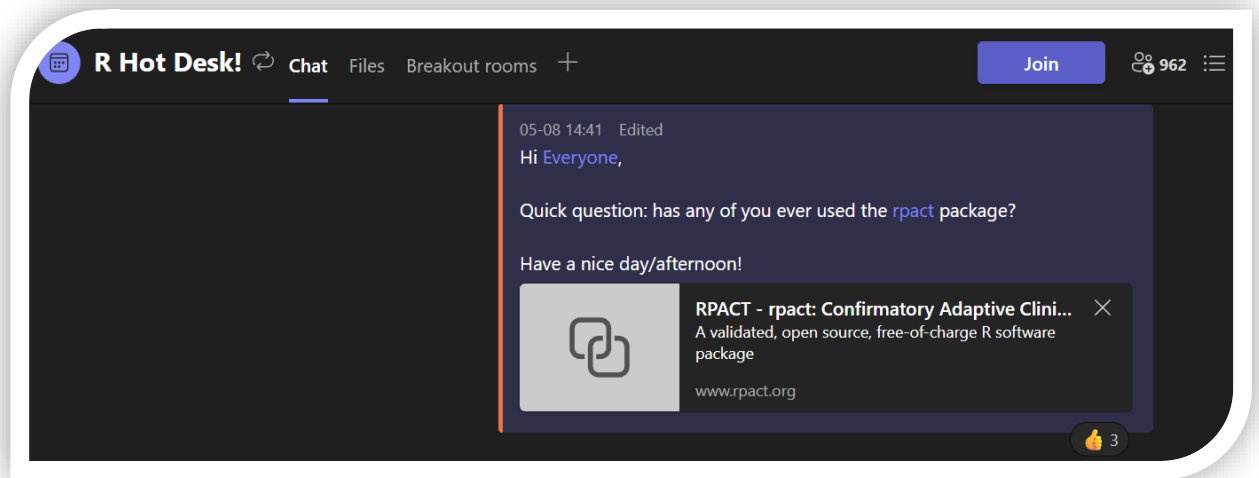
Within 40 minutes we had identified a Subject Matter Expert on the *rpact* package. The ability to quickly find Subject Matter Experts is undeniably a significant Return on Investment of R @ AZ!

R @ AZ now counts 1,100+ members. That's more than 604,450 potential connections!
To all of us, this is the true value of the R @ AZ community. Over the past two years, we have successfully built bridges between numerous departments, fostering connections and nurturing collaboration.

SinceRely,

Guillaume Desachy, R @ AZ Lead

To know more on how we built the R @ AZ community, you can check this post on the Posit website. To know more on how the R @ AZ community steering committee and the Learning & Development department collaborated, you can check this Posit Meetup recording.