

Creating a Successful Membership Website



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How You Can Build a Successful Membership Site

Have you been thinking about building a membership site? If you answered yes, you are jumping on the bandwagon with many others – you definitely are not alone. There's been a growing interest in these types of sites. So if building a successful membership site is your goal, you'll want to read on.

Marketing Your Site

In large your success is based on how well you can market your site. The very first thing you need to do isn't build your site, but rather it's build your list. Then you can build trust with those subscribers using an autoresponder. Use both a sequence and take advantage of your blog by emailing the updates to them regularly.

Next, you will introduce those individuals on your list to the option of joining your membership site. This model is a successful one because lots of people like to be your subscriber and take advantage of your free updates. Some of your more serious followers will want to take advantage of moving to the next level – your membership service. It makes sense to present this option after these individuals are already hooked on the information you provide them.

Great, once you convert them to a member you need to keep them there. In fact, retention is the most difficult task you'll undertake. Use this checklist to help with retention.

#1 Do ongoing updates to your member's area content.

#2 Offer your members superior support either on a Facebook page, through your membership forum or through email.

#3 Offer your members access to something that they will see as useful as they move forward – this could be software, an app, tools, etc. This is an excellent way to keep your members.

Building a membership definitely takes some time and initially it requires a great deal of effort as well – no one said setting up a successful membership site was easy. However, once the site is up and running and you have a stable membership running such a site is really quite enjoyable and it requires very little effort on a week to week basis, but it does generate a repetitive income.

The key is to not over complicate things. Keep things simple and you'll be much better off. If you are inspired to start your own membership site, you now have some great tips to get you started. So what are you waiting for?

Why You Should Create a Membership Site

If you've been thinking about creating a membership site, you should spend a little time to defining just why you should create a membership site and what the benefits will be to you. Let's have a look at some of the main benefits.

#1 Membership sites provide an easy way for you to interact with your users. If your goal is to build a closed community of people that are committed, this is by far the best way to accomplish this. Everyone involved has paid money to become involved so they tend to be more committed than those members associated with free communities or open communities.

#2 A membership site is easy to update. Sure, distributing your content or product in the form of an ebook isn't as complicated, but it is much harder to keep current. Once you have put it together and it's out there – that's pretty much what people get. After a few years, sometimes in a matter of a couple of months, the content is no longer relevant or even if it is relevant it becomes stale. With a membership site you can add, edit or even delete content just like you would with a blog.

#3 You can generate recurring income with your membership site. This is one of the most appealing aspects of a membership site. You can charge a monthly fee or an annual fee, or you can offer both. The more flexible you are the more members you'll attract.

#4 You don't need to have good design skills. If you are creating an ebook you need to have some great design skills. Some people attempt to do their ebooks in Powerpoint if they don't have the necessary design skills – they quickly learn just how bad of an idea this is. Powerpoint is not designed for this type of project. When you have a membership site, except for your logo, you can do everything in a premade WordPress theme and keep the design minimize. For many that simple factor makes the membership site the best option.

#5 Your product will continue to evolve and become better over time. The more user interaction allowed the more valuable the information on your site will become and the more information that will actually be created.

This is just five reasons why you should create a membership site. There are certainly others. Why not give it a try now?

2 Mistakes That can Kill Your Membership Program

For a membership program to be successful certain things need to be in place. There are things that can also cause your membership to fail. Let's look at 2 common mistakes made that can kill your membership program.

Mistake #1 – There is not adequate momentum

If you want your membership program to be a success you need to have momentum. This means you need to have tons of people that are eager to join. The minimum number of people you should have ready to sign up is 50. Less than that and it's not likely to work – your program is likely going to fizzle out. There are few people that will hang on to a dead forum where nothing is happening. They want action, information, interesting advice, etc.

There should be at minimum of 10 posts a day happening on your membership site forum. That's the minimum. You will notice if you can get your membership over a 100 that suddenly things come to life.

Mistake #2 – You start a membership site because you think your idea is good

Bottom line – it doesn't matter what you think is good. It matters whether others have an interest in what your membership site has to offer. You should be applauded for having the enthusiasm to want to start a membership site, but before you put all of that effort into your idea, make sure what you think is a good idea is really what others are willing to pay to join.

When you start your membership site make sure that you take the time to create a buzz before you start your program.

Let's look at an example. Project 123, created by XYZ is that kind of project that is just begging to be part of a membership program. The place to start is by creating a on buzz on your blog, on Facebook and through other social media channels that builds momentum so that people simply can't wait to sign up.

That's two common mistakes that are often made that will cause your membership program to fail. There are plenty of others. Before you take on a membership site make sure you take some time to research the best way to make your site a success. There are proven things that work and proven things that fail. Knowing this before you begin can reduce your chance of failure.

Setting Up a Membership Site

Creating a successful membership site isn't something you just do haphazardly and then wait for the money to roll in. If you are serious about creating your own successful membership site the first thing you need to do is figure out your audience is going to be and then create a market for your site.

Putting together your membership site is going to involve the investment of many hours, especially if you are serious about getting it right. Make sure you are up for the challenge!

Currently, what is the size of your audience? While you don't have to have an audience when you first build your membership website, it really helps, and it's a good idea. There is tons of stuff out there, and people are getting leery about parting with their money. The larger and the more passionate your user base (list) is when you start, the easier is going to be for you to have a successful membership site.

Here are some excellent ways you can test your market.

1. Survey the readers you have – Surveying these readers can lead to valuable feedback that helps you define the market for your new membership site. You could be surprised – often what you think your readers want to see more of isn't what they want at all. You can use this information to create a more useful product offering for your readers.

2. Buy traffic – If you have a limited audience or you aren't ready to tell your audience what you are up to think about purchasing \$100 or so of Adword traffic and see how well it converts. If you find you have a bunch of fake sales or opt ins it's very likely that you have a nice size market to draw from for your membership site.

3. Split test – If you have a pretty good size market and you have a pretty good idea what your product is going to be then you can think about doing a split test. Create at least two different sales pages with variations. Try setting up different copy, features, etc. Then you use Google Website Optimizer to do your split test. This is an excellent tool that lets you show different users various variations of your site and it lets you see which ones are converting the highest by judging the number of email opt in and the number of people that click your faux checkout page.

How to Setup a Membership Program

Setting up a membership program can create a residual income that goes on and on – this is especially true when it done correctly. The key is to create a product line that members want access to.

The cost per month for your membership site can vary or you can even offer different pricing tiers, but in order to get people to pay those monthly or yearly fees you are going to have to have something to offer that they want, not just for a single month but over and over again. Of course, a free membership program has far less demands on you. People will easily be convinced to sign up when it doesn't cost them anything. Still, digital products are popular for both free and paid membership programs. They are easy to share among members and are readily available to ensure you have ongoing content that's desirable.

Setting up your free membership program is easy. All you have to do is add a forum to your blog. With WordPress you can use the SimplePress plugin. Although it's not the best forum software around it is definitely easy to install and start to use and it will keep the appearance of your blog/site so that your branding isn't affected.

If you decide you want to set up a paid membership program try the WordPress plugin Wishlist Member. It costs around \$100 but it is worth every dime. Wishlist is easily adapted to a number of different program structures. It is very easy to integrate with your payment system such as 1ShoppingCart or Paypaiil and it easily merges with email responders like Mailchimp.

So it is a good idea to create a membership program right from the start. No matter what your plans are for your membership program, it's a good idea not to rush, even if it is going to be free. You need to makes sure that you have adequate momentum and a solid reason for setting up a membership program. You should also carefully think through the structure to you are focusing on. You need to know what you want to offer your members and how you are going to deliver the program.

One thing is for sure – you should never ever settle for creating a membership program that is little more than mediocre. Rather, take your time and create a system that has real value. Make sure it is very useful and in high demand. Why not create something that could change lives?

Things You Should Know About Membership Websites

If you have been debating over whether or not a membership site is the right option for you to generate income, you'll want to read on to find out the answers to four of the most commonly asked questions.

#1 Is it really a worthwhile undertaking to create a membership site?

There's no question that a membership site will create a lot of extra work for a blogger, so you need to be well informed to decide if this is the right choice for you. The benefit to a membership program is that it will increase the sense of community that's going on with your blog, it builds goodwill and best of all it can be an excellent source of income. The downside is that it requires hard work to maintain your membership site.

#2 Should my membership site be paid or free?

This is a commonly debated topic. What you do need to do is decide whether you will have a paid or free site before you begin. It is very difficult to convert a free membership site to a paid membership site without losing a large portion of your members. If you are determined to start a free membership site then you need to have a plan for how you are going to monetize it later on. Otherwise, you'll be drained of your time and energy and have no financial benefits.

#3 What should I offer?

If you plan to start a successful membership site you will need to have an outstanding offer in order to entice people to join and become members. Just creating a forum isn't going to be enough. When people pay for a membership they will have expectations and you are going to need to meet those expectations or you will lose the member.

#4 Can you over deliver?

Absolutely! The key is not offer too much for a too low price. It is not enough to have an outstanding offer. There are all kinds of pitfalls you must try to avoid if you are going to create a program that's successful. Just one major mistake can doom your membership site to failure. So set a fair price for a fair value and you'll avoid facing this challenge.

That's it – four of the most common questions asked by those who are thinking about starting their own membership site. Now you know and that means you are better informed to make a decision.

Pricing Your Membership and Accepting Payments

Membership sites are a great way to create a recurring income and when done correctly members will come. The right combination includes offering the right products and the right price. If you price yourself too high and you are the new kid on the block, you are far more likely to fail. There's a strategy to how much you charge and what payments you accept, that can help you to build your business.

Starting low is smart – when your membership fees are low you are far more likely to get people to your site, and you'll also reduce your cancellations especially if you increase the price for new members in the future. It is a much bigger challenge to decrease your price than it is to increase your price – many people don't realize this.

Have a look at other membership sites that are in your niche and see what they are charging for membership. This will give you a pretty good idea of what the 'right price' or the acceptable pricing range is. It's a good idea to fit into this range or be less. If you are more and a new membership site, people are more likely to head over to an established site.

You might also want to test whether your potential members prefer to pay a one off charge annually or whether they prefer a monthly payment. If you thought it would be monthly, you aren't alone, most people do; however, it seems that far more people prefer the one off payment, so make sure you understand your market. Keep this in mind when setting up your payment option. It is generally beneficial to offer both payment options.

Another important factor is determining what payments you are going to accept. PayPal is by far the easiest and you can have it up in running in no time at all – minutes to be exact. Potential members really tend to favor PayPal.

Clickbank is another solution that is pretty popular and for the site owner it provide more analytics and as well as features. However, you are going to have to be willing to lay out some cash to begin with. Plus, it takes a bit for your product to be approved.

It's really up to you which one you choose, or if you decide to choose both, but unless you have a good reason for not using these.

5 Things Your Membership Site Should Have

Membership sites are growing in popularity day by day. But in order for your membership site to be successful and generate a recurring revenue it needs to offer the members value. In addition, your membership site should have these 5 things.

#1 Total Content Control

Remember, you are in control of what it is people see or do not get to see. For example, you can show the post preview but require membership access for the reader to see the rest of the post. This allows you to instantly upsell using a blog format, which is very handy.

You can also block out specific paragraphs or even certain sentences on your membership site, making it only visible to those who are members. You have all kinds of flexibility to entice non members and please members.

#2 Build a Stylish Welcome Area

You can create a very stylish welcome area that is enticing to both paying members and free members. This is a good area to use to upsell and convert leads into paying members. Remember giving them a ‘taste’ of what you have to offer is a great way to get them as a paying member.

#3 Manage Subscriptions

You are going to need to have control over your members access, duration of membership and free promotions such as a free 7 day trial. In the latter, if they don’t become paying members you will need your system to automatically lock them out. The same applies to members that’s monthly dues don’t go through.

#4 Various Membership Levels

You can offer a number of different membership levels to broaden your reach. You should create different content for the different memberships or you can block content from some levels. You should upgrade or downgrade your members. You should create an upsell page that members see automatically when they try to access something they don’t have the rights to.

#5 Import and Export Members

Your site should make it easy for you to import or export members. You should be able to use a csv file to move memberships around, to download the data, to upload memberships from other membership sites you have, etc.

That’s it – you now have five other things you should ensure that your membership site has available to help improve the likelihood that your membership site will be successful and begin to generate a recurring income for you.

Find Out Which Membership Plugins You Need

You have your sales funnel up and rolling, your email auto responder in place, and now it is time to start to build the rest of your website. There are some membership plugins you are going to want to make sure you are using. Let’s have a look at what those are.

There are many WordPress plugins that you can take advantage of that will let you create the membership part of your website. While there are other ways to accomplish this, through WordPress is by far one of the easiest ways to accomplish this.

Be able to protect some of the pages from public view. A membership site isn't of any value if you are unable to block the content from those who are not paying members. You can use a plugin to ensure the public, and member's of various levels see only what they are entitled to see.

Provide a content drip. Perhaps your website is offering an 8 week program of some type. These plugins let you release specific content every week or every so many days to ensure members aren't able to skip ahead and have to follow the program.

Create multiple user tiers. Many membership sites, offer different pricing structures. Let's say you want to have 4 different pricing tiers, and each tier is able to access specific information. Use a plugin to allow you to create the number of tiers you need and then and assign the appropriate content.

Create a Free Trial. Often the easiest way to hook a new member is to bring them on board for a week or two of free access. You can use a plugin to achieve this.

What you will need overall is going to depend on what type of site you are creating, whether this is your first membership site, your skill level, the complexity of the website and other factors. It's important that you match the plugins you choose to use.

Take a little time to evaluate your exact needs. This will help you overcome any uncertainty you might be dealing with. Don't be afraid to tweak and change in the early days. Before you go live is a great time to play with plugins. You can set up some dummy membership accounts and check out the flow to see if it's working the way you want it to. Doing this can help you have the best possible membership site once you go live.

4 Components of an Effective Membership Website

Over time, membership websites have gone from being an experiment in income generation to being huge revenue generating machines. There are individuals that are making millions of dollars each month through their membership sites. More and more people attempt to create their own membership site because they have heard about the potential to generate revenue through a systematized procedure. To get more from your membership site sales and systematize it eventually, you'll need to have these 4 components.

#1 Set your price and know why you chose that price. A membership site with a low monthly rate will get a big volume of sales, where as, an expensive membership site will get fewer sales but make a higher commission on each sale. You can also consider having a tiered membership structure.

#2 Use an introduction video to create a sense of urgency. The world changes rapidly and while there might be thousands of claimed solutions floating about, if your membership site offers a real solution to a very real problem, you're far more likely to enjoy success. However, you are going to need to explain how and why your membership site will benefit the user and you'll need to do this in 2 minutes or less with an intro video.

#3 You should have a 'Buy Now' button appear three times on the sales page. This is considered the ideal number of times for it to appear to maximize the number of sales. One of the most common mistakes is to just place a 'Buy Now' button at the bottom of the sales page. Place a button near the top, in the middle and then at the bottom of the page.

#4 Provide your members with a sense of direction. New members really don't know what to do with their membership, what to access, what to watch, etc. When a new member sees 50 video that they can watch they likely don't have a clue where to start. By giving your members some guidance on the order of material to view you break it down into bits and pieces that your members are able to digest without becoming overwhelmed.

The implementation of these 4 components are a great start to enjoying the success you desire from your membership site. Once your site is established, you'll be able to relax a little and watch your residual income grow and flourish over time.

Choosing the Right Membership Software for You

Membership sites have become very popular and that's for a good reason – a number of people who have mastered the running of these sites are generating recurring income for an investment of very little time.

One of the tools you'll want to invest in if you plan to start a membership site is membership software. There's plenty of it – Digital Access Pass, aMember, Memergate, Wishlist Member, Easy Member Pro and on and on the list goes.

So how do you decide which membership site software is best for you? The key is to find the one that fits your budget and has the tools you want. Although Wishlist Member seems to come highly recommended because it integrates with WordPress and it's quite cheap compare to some others. Just choose a good WordPress theme and you'll be in business. Your site will look good and you'll be ready to get down to business.

Easy Member Pro

This software does just what it says it will do. It's an easy setup and it's professional software. It offers all of the features that you will need to create a membership quickly and easily.

Amember

Amember is another popular choice. One of the things many like about this package is that it has over 60 options for payment processors. There is an online demo that you can have a look at and it has a free trial offer too, so you can try it and see if it's right for you. It's priced pretty reasonable.

Memberspeed

This software has gone down in price just recently and so many feel there's great value here for the price. It's definitely worth checking out to see if it does what you need.

MemberStar

This is a monthly subscription and so it offers some flexibility. Many find the \$79 a month high, but remember if you are setting up a membership site that's for more than 100 members who are each going to pay you at least \$10 a month that's more than \$1000 a month, so this package is certainly in your budget. Have a look at what it has to offer.

That's just a handful of the membership software packages that are out there. A good way to get a feel for them is to read the reviews that others have provided and then if there is an opportunity for a trial use take advantage of it. The key is to find the features you want.

Find Out Why You Should Build a Membership Site

These days, you are bound to hear a lot about membership sites. After all, there's quite a buzz around them. However, if you are unsure whether this is something for you, you are not alone. You can find the answers here. Read on to find out why you should build a membership site.

The first thing you should know is that those who have successful membership sites enjoy incredible benefits, especially when it comes to income. In fact, there are few other opportunities online quite like it, offering this kind of potential for minimal time investment.

With a membership site, you aren't faced with the worry of products - being stuck with obsolete products or not having enough product for demand. It's tough – especially online where you face mounds of competition from around the world. That's what's so different and so unique about a membership site. Sure, to start with, your membership site will require a fair bit of work, but after you have it all up and running you will not have to continually invent, create and launch new products. You won't be playing any guessing games.

With most businesses you sell a product and then you have to continue to sell your clients different products in order to continue to generate revenue. This is not only a pain, it's risky. You must be constantly guessing what to offer your clients and if you guess wrong, you are going to be out the cost of your stock and generate little income.

A membership site is different. You only have to sell to your clients once. Once your subscribers become a member they remain your customer without you having to sell them something over and over. That means your membership site will generate recurring income for you.

That recurring income is the main reason for investing your time to create a membership site. By having a recurring billing structure that is built right into your product, every month, every quarter, or every year, depending on your payment system your client renews and your income continues to flow without the worries associated with traditional product businesses.

Building a membership site will require you to invest a fair bit of time initially, but be patient, because it will not be long before you will be able to sit back and enjoy the recurring income month in and month out.

Creating and Distributing Content for Your Membership Site

People are going to pay to be members on your membership site, so you need to put a great deal of thought and effort into creating and distributing content that is valuable enough for the fees they are paying.

It is important for you to map out your website right from the start. You need to know what pages you plan to have, how they are all going to fit together and how members are going to be able to navigate your website easily. This is specific to the kind of site you create.

Creating Your Membership Tiers and Your Content Drip

One thing that's great with both Amember and Wishlist is that both of these will let you create any number of membership tiers. So you could easily have 4 different pricing tiers – Platinum, gold, silver, and bronze. This can really help to increase your sales and it also allows your members to find a program that is tailored to their needs.

Perhaps they are just beginning and you don't need a lot of advanced features, so you can move them into the bronze package and then later on they can upgrade to the silver or gold, perhaps even the platinum. This is a really easy setup if you use plugins and when that user tries to access content that is above their tier they get a message that offers an opportunity to upgrade.

Another possible distribution model is called the 'content drip' and this is effective at making sure that members actually follow the program and aren't able to jump ahead. They cannot gather all the information and then take advantage of your return policy. It protects your membership site's integrity.

Another option is the \$1 trial or making use of the preview tool to give visitors an opportunity to access the first couple of paragraphs of your content before they sign up.

Before you dig into your setup make sure you know what your membership tiers are going to be and how you would like to create and distribute the content for your membership site. It's much easier to do things correctly to begin with, rather than attempting to work backwards. Always keep in mind the importance of creating strong content. Having great distribution channels won't be of much value unless you have good content that is worthy of being distributed.

How to Create a Squeeze Page for Your Membership Page

An important component to your membership page is to have a solid squeeze page. Before you can create a squeeze page you will need a professional email auto responder like MailChimp or Aweber. This service lets you capture email addresses, then send out mass mailings to those on the list.

For example, a visitor reaches your page, where you have an opt in offer that provides them with "5 Steps to Succeed Online." Once your visitor signs up he/she will automatically receive one email a week over a five week period each covering one of the steps. Having the ability to communicate to a new audience is key to the success of your squeeze page and ultimately your membership site.

When you are looking for the right professional email auto responder there are some features to look for:

- * Look for a package that is robust and will work for you now and in the future when your list has grown significantly.
- * You want your list to be customizable.
- * You want to compare prices and choose the option that has the best value.

There are some things you should be looking for when you are looking for the right application to help you set up your sales funnel.

Cookie Drop – For example, let's say that someone goes to your page and then decided to sign up. From there they are taken to a different page where they are given access to the free, video, ebook, etc. You do not want them to ever see that initial page again after they are in your sales funnel. From that point on, you want them to only see whatever free content or sales offers you have going on inside your membership site. A cookie drop places a cookie in the user's computer which informs the website they are signed up and that they no longer need to see the squeeze page.

Template Options – Make sure you have adequate templates to choose from that include options such as no sidebar, sidebar, navigation bar, no navigation bar, video or no video. The more options you have available the better for your page and your membership site.

Get your auto responder up and running and your squeeze page done and you will be on your way to get your membership rolling. Success is at your fingertips.

How to Build a Successful Membership Site by Ensuring Valuable Content

Build a good membership website and you can be enjoying a solid income in no time, providing you implement the right strategy. A good membership site builds a strong relationship with a selected group of followers who are able to market your products/services. In order for your site to be successful and generate a steady stream of income, you are going to have to have good content. This can be a real challenge! There are some things you can do to help you accomplish a regular flow of valuable content.

#1: Content That is Generated by Members

Your membership site needs to have a forum – in fact, it’s a must. Then your members can participate in helping you add social value to your website. You can eliminate a great deal of work for yourself by having plenty of fresh content on your site which is generated by users. It will continue to build perpetual value for your membership website. However, remember, you still need to ensure that you are adding value to your website too.

#2 Market Affiliate Products

You will collect information from your subscribers about the type of content they are interested in, but this doesn’t mean you have to use the information you collect to develop the content yourself. Instead, you might partner with a JV Partner who is willing and able to add valuable content to your membership site in exchange for the marketing the products they have to your visitors. You make an agreement to promote their products through the use of an affiliate link and you are able to make a profit from the sale of their products to members.

#3 Poll Your Members

One terrific thing with running a membership site is that you have the ability to engage and interact with your members. You can also collect information from your members about the type of content/products they are very interested in. When you gather this type of information from your members, you will be 100 percent sure that the latest content you add to the website will have adequate value to you’re your members continuing to be members.

You can quickly see why a membership site that’s built well and incorporates a good monetization strategy can become a profitable venture. So start by creating your theme and then sit down and create your monetization strategy. When you incorporate the right membership website technology with persistence, you will soon be enjoying a healthy income stream from your membership website.

How Will You Facilitate Membership Interaction on your Membership Site

This is one of the most important questions because your answer will determine how hard your setup process is going to be. There are basically four options available to you for your member interaction inside of your website.

1. Forum - If member interaction is will be a key part of your membership website, a forum is becomes a must. There are a many forum software options that you can choose from, each with their advantages and disadvantages and each with their own level of complexity in setup.
2. Comments -This will permit your members to be able to comment and become involved in discussions on the material that you offer on each of your website pages. This is perfect for smaller interaction, and it will definitely add value to your page, but it is harder to search for the comments that have been made.
3. Both Forum and Comments - If you would like to create more of an atmosphere of community then offering both a forum and the ability to leave comments is a great way to achieve this.
4. No Forum and no Comments – Generally the elimination of member interaction, occurs on the lowest end of products or the highest end of products. For example, let's say you took a small e-book and turned it into a membership site (low end product) then having comments or a forum is very much overkill. On the other hand. if you sell a really high priced product, your message can get watered down too much with comments and forums, so you opt not to include.

For all options, except for forums, there's not a lot you need to do. Everything you need is built into WordPress. You can add a comment plugin like Disqus. However, if you are going to include a forum then the complexity of your site goes up. Try to find a forum app that will work right out of the box to reduce the time necessary to learn. There are plenty of choices, but here are two options available for a forum.

Vanilla – This software takes a bit to get used to using, but once you figure it out, you'll likely love it. It's one of the best looking forum programs and there are numerous free plugins to interact with it and increase the usability.

PhpBB – This is by far the most commonly used software for forums. It's open source software so its free and it is an excellent choice because so many people are comfortable using it. In fact, the majority of forums online are built using phpBB. However, it doesn't look as good as some others.