**1. The Ultimate Membership Site Checklist**

If you’ve heard that membership sites are really profitable, you’ve heard right. But maybe you’re not sure how to start, run and grow one. That’s where this checklist comes in. This is your crash-course checklist guide to hit the ground running…

**Step 1: Pick a Niche Topic**

There’s no use in setting up a membership site if no one is interested in what you’re offering. So find out what your market wants by:

* Researching to find out what they’re already buying.
* Surveying them to find out what they want and need.
* Checking keyword tools to see what sort of information they’re looking for in the search engines.

Hint: Finding out what people are already buying is the BEST indicator of what they’ll buy in the future. So focus on the first step above when doing market research to find out what’s popular in your niche. For example, search ClickBank.com to see what topics are bestsellers in your niche.

**Step 2: Choose a Membership Site Model**

Next, you need to decide how you’re going to deliver the information. For example:

* Ongoing monthly membership site, which goes on indefinitely.
* Fixed-term membership site, which ends after a specific duration (such as six months).
* One-off membership site, which is where the member pays once to gain access to a “vault” of related information that’s designed to solve a specific problem.

Next…

**Step 3: Develop a Plan**

Now that you know your membership model and topic, take time to develop an overall business plan. Ask yourself these questions:

* Who is your audience?
* What do they want?
* Who are your competitors?
* What are their strengths and weaknesses?
* What are your business strengths and weaknesses?
* How will you bring traffic to your site?
* How will you convert this traffic into paying customers?
* What types of content will you give to members?
* How will you make money on the backend?
* How will you retain members?

Note: you’ll figure how to answer most of these questions using the information below, as well as using the other checklists in this bundle.

**Step 4: Craft Your USP**

Your prospects have a lot of options when it comes to solving their problems, so when they land on your membership site they’re going to have this question: “Why should I choose you over your competitors?”

You answer this question by forming a USP (unique selling proposition), which tells prospect how your site is different from (and better than) the competitors. For example:

* You offer personal coaching.
* You offer an exceptional guarantee.
* You have special qualifications to teach this information.
* Your membership charges a low price.
* You charge a high price (for high quality).
* You offer a private support forum.
* You offer live events.
* You bring in guest experts.
* You have the biggest membership.
* You’re the first to teach some specific strategy.

And so on.

Just be sure your unique sales proposition is something that your prospects and customers value.

**Step 4: Price Your Membership**

Next, you need to determine how much you’ll charge. Ask yourself:

* Is it a one-off payment or is it a monthly membership?
* How much are your competitors charging for similar content?
* What are your overall income goals?
* How many members will you need to achieve these goals?

HINT: Keep in mind that up to 75% of your income will come in on the backend of your site. So if you want to make $100,000 with your site, as little as $25,000 may come in the form of frontend membership site fees.

**Step 6: Select Your Platform**

Next, you need to decide how you’ll set up your membership site, and what sort of tools you’ll use to automate it. Specifically:

* Set up a membership site using a well-known script such as Amember.com.
* Set up a membership site using WordPress and a membership plugin.
* Set up a membership site on a password-protected forum or a secret Facebook group.
* Set up a membership site by having customers sign up for your autoresponder.

You’ll also need to choose a payment processor, such as PayPal.com, 2Checkout.com, Stripe.com, ClickBank.com or a similar processor that meets your needs.

**Step 7: Create Content**

If you’ve done your market research, then you know what your market wants – now you need to create content that solves their problems and meets their needs. Ask yourself these questions:

* How much content do you need? For example, are you creating one set of content, or do you need ongoing content for an indefinite amount of time?
* How will you format the content? E.G., reports, videos, tools, etc.?
* How will you create the content so it builds on previous pieces? (This continuity is what keeps people engaged and reading.)
* How will you add value to the content? (E.G., Mind maps, checklists, infographics, swipes, templates, etc.)

Be sure to create at least a few weeks’ worth of content before you launch the site. Next…

**Step 8: Drive and Convert Traffic**

You need to develop a traffic plan and then start implementing this plan by focusing on one method at a time. These methods may include:

* Installing an affiliate program.
* Recruiting other marketing partners for co-promotions.
* Blogging as a guest author.
* Blogging on your own site.
* Engaging on social media.
* Purchasing advertising on Facebook and other sites.
* Producing viral content.
* Building your list.
* Running contests.

And similar advertising activities.

Next…

**Step 9: Sell On The Backend**

As mentioned, most of your income will likely come in the backend through the recommendations of related products and services. Here are ways to promote offers on the backend:

* Order form upsells.
* Thank you page recommendations.
* Thank you email.
* Via any and all other emails you send to customers.
* Links in products.
* Links in bonus offers.
* Links within the membership site.
* Links within private forums or groups.
* Recommendations during webinars or coaching sessions.

Next…

**Step 10: Retain Members**

A big key to making money with your site is to retain your members. To that end, consider these ideas:

* Pick a membership model that has higher retention rates, such as a fixed-term membership site.
* Offer regular, ongoing bonuses to those who remain members.
* Surprise members with bonuses and features, such as free webinars.
* Focus on giving members something they can’t get anywhere else.
* Make members feel like they’re part of something bigger.

In short, create a high-quality site where members feel special and get solutions to their problems.

**Conclusion**

So there you have it – the ten steps of starting, running and growing a membership site. Be sure to check out the other checklist guides in this package to get more details about these steps!

**2. The Membership Ideas Checklist**

Your very first steps when you’re setting up a membership site are to decide on these two things:

1. The topic and niche of your membership site.
2. The model for your membership site.

Use the following checklist to walk through these decisions so you can get your site of to a good start…

**Choose a Niche And Topic**

First, you need to find a profitable niche. If you don’t have one already in mind, then start with these steps to uncover dozens of possible markets:

* Go to marketplaces and check the bestsellers to see which markets are popular. (E.G, go to Amazon and check the bestseller nonfiction book list, see what’s popular on JVZoo.com and ClickBank.com, etc.)
* Brainstorm a list of markets based on your own problems, hobbies and interests.
* Brainstorm a list of markets based on the problems, hobbies and interests of your friends and family. (E.G., You have a friend who restores classic cars – that’s a market.)
* Browse a newsstand/magazine rack for market ideas.
* Check what’s trending on social media.
* Use a keyword tool and enter searches such as “secrets,” “tips” and “advice” to uncover niches you never knew existed.
* Browse news sites for niche ideas.
* Consider broad, evergreen markets such as:
* Weight loss
* Fitness and health
* Hobbies (golf, fishing, car restoration)
* Sports
* Medical problems
* Relationships and marriage
* Family and children
* Caring for the elderly
* Pets and animals
* Career
* Education
* Travel
* Home improvement
* Security (personal, computer, home)
* Psychology
* Anti-aging
* Design
* Make money online
* Small business

(For each of these markets that interest you, brainstorm niche markets.)

Once you have ideas for markets, then you need to find out if the market is profitable and pick out a popular topic. You can accomplish both of these at once by doing your market research. Here’s how:

* Search the market keywords (such as “weight loss”) in marketplaces to see what types of products people are buying. Look for bestsellers on:
* Amazon (including Kindle)
* ClickBank
* JVZoo
* iTunes
* Google Play
* eBay
* Search your keywords in Google to see what the top sites in the market are selling. Be sure to check out the sponsored ads too.
* Flip through niche magazines (such as “Men’s Fitness”) to see what topics they cover, and what types of products are being sold in the advertising section.
* Use a keyword tool such as MarketSamurai.com to see what people are searching for in the search engines. Pay close attention to buying-related keywords such as “buy organic gardening book.”
* Survey your market to find out what they want. You can use a tool like SurveyMonkey.com to create and distribute your survey.
* Visit online communities such as niche forums, Facebook groups and Quora.com to see what topics come up repeatedly.

If you complete all of these steps, it will quickly become apparent what your market wants. You can then create a membership site around this topic.

**Pick a Membership Site Model**

Now that you know what your membership site is about, you can now pick a membership site model that best suits the niche and your needs.

For example, if you notice that a lot of people want to learn how to write a sales letter, and you can think of 24 lessons to offer members, then you might create a 24-week (six month) short-term membership site.

Another example: if you’re catering to people who want to lose weight, you might offer an ongoing member support forum where you can motivate members and offer advice.

Take a look at these popular models that are based on how and when the member pays you:

**The Free Membership Site**

Yes, this membership site is totally free on the front end… but then you sell related products and services on the backend. This could be a vault-style site, or a monthly membership.

**The Monthly Membership Site**

Here’s where the site goes on indefinitely, and members pay a monthly fee to get continued access.

**The Fixed-Term Membership Site**

This is where the membership site runs for a specific duration (such as six months), so members pay a monthly fee for that duration and receive new content until the membership naturally ends.

**The Vault Membership Site**

Here’s where members pay a one-off fee to gain access to a large collection of materials.

**The Tiered Membership Site**

This is where members select from different levels of membership (e.g., Bronze, Silver and Gold level memberships), all at different price points.

And here are the different ways you can deliver content:

**The Modular Site**

This is where you offer training materials which are broken up into modules, which you deliver on a weekly or monthly basis. Members pay an ongoing fee on a monthly or weekly basis.

Example: a 52 lesson guide to starting and running a business.

**The UPS Site**

This is where you send a physical shipment with a collection of resources every month.

Example: a collection of DVDs and manuals for bodybuilders.

**The Coaching Membership Site**

Here’s where you offer group or personal coaching through email, phone, Skype or the delivery method of your choice.

Example: a place where new online marketers can ask an expert questions.

**The Community/Support Site**

This is where you set up a secret Facebook group or forum for members to support and offer advice to each other. Naturally, you can and should post as well.

Example: a place for dieters to support one another.

**The SaaS Site**

This is a software-as-service site, where members retain access to software for as long as they remain paying members.

Example: An autoresponder service with monthly fees.

**The Hybrid Site**

This is a combination of some of the sites mentioned above.

For example, you might have a vault site along with a members-only support forum for dieters.

**In Sum…**

While it takes a bit of legwork upfront to find a suitable niche and pick your membership site model, these pieces are keys to running a profitable site. So don’t hurry through this part of the start-up process!

**3. The Membership USP Checklist**

Your market is crowded. Everyone and their brother seems to be peddling a solution to your prospects. They have lots of options. And so when they land on your sales page, they’re going to be wondering why they should join your membership site, rather than doing business with your competitor instead.

Tell you what, your prospects aren’t going to spend a whole lot of time coming up with an answer. Don’t make them guess why your site is better than and different from the competitors’ offers. Instead, tell them directly by formulating and showcasing an USP (unique sales proposition).

Let’s walk through the steps of defining your USP…

**Brainstorming Your USP**

To kick off your brainstorming session, ask yourself the following questions. Take note that you’ll need to be doing research on your competitors in order to determine how you differ from them:

How is your delivery format different than your competitors’ formats? E.G., maybe you’re the first in the niche to create a membership site, or the first to create a fixed-term site.

How is your pricing model different than the competitors? Lower? Higher? Are you positioning yourself on affordability? High quality? Value?

How is your guarantee different than the competitor’s? For example, do you offer a “double your money back” guarantee?

How is your customer service different from your competitors’ service? For example, do you offer 24/7 support? Phone support? Or maybe you just promise friendlier service in a niche that’s not known to be friendly. (Remember United’s “Fly the Friendly Skies” slogan?)

Do you have any special qualifications to teach this material? For example:

* You can prove your expertise with your own results. E.G., You have a novel-writing site, and you can show that your novel hit the New York Times bestseller list.
* You have demonstrated your expertise with others. E.G., you have proof that your clients’ novels have landed on bestseller lists.
* You have a degree or other credentials in the field. E.G., you have a business degree, and you’re showing others how to start a business.
* You have work experience in the field. E.G., you’re a dog trainer running a dog-training site.
* You’ve won awards in the niche. E.G., You’re a writer who has won an award for your novel.
* You have any other qualifications that increase your credibility in the niche. E.G., A well-known person in the niche has highly praised your work.

Are you the first in the niche to offer this information? For example, maybe you’ve invented a special diet, which you share in a weight-loss membership site.

Do you teach/share the content in an unique way? For example, maybe you’re the only one in your niche to offer weekly group coaching sessions.

Do you offer unusual or extra perks/bonuses? For example, maybe you offer ongoing training videos as the main offer, but members also get access to live monthly webinars.

General brainstorm: what else sets you apart or makes you different from your competitors? Spend a good 15 or so minutes brainstorming absolutely everything you can that sets you apart. Don’t censor your answers—just write down everything that comes to mind.

**Choosing the USP**

So at this point you have a nice list of possible USPs. Now let’s narrow this list and choose one.

Ask yourself these two questions:

* What do your customers and prospects value the most? Point is, your USP must focus on a benefit or feature that your market really wants. Generally, this will be the main deciding factor of which USP to choose from your list.
* What sets you apart from your competitors the most? That is, what USP will help you position yourself in the market in the most beneficial way?

These two questions will help you select the best USP, although as mentioned the first point is the one that is likely to be the main deciding factor.

And finally…

**Conveying the USP**

Your USP can’t be a nuanced, paragraph-long statement. It needs to be short – just a handful of words—and it needs to convey the full impact of your message.

How short? Look at these actual examples of USPs:

* Folgers: Mountain grown coffee.
* FedEx: When it absolutely, positively has to get there overnight.
* Domino’s Pizza delivery: 30 minutes or it’s free.
* United Airlines: Fly the friendly skies.
* Burger King: Have it your way.
* M&Ms candy: melts in your mouth, not in your hand.

Point is, your final step is to take your USP and boil it down into one succinct statement.

Let’s wrap things up…

**Conclusion**

One final tip: be sure your staff and freelancers are trained on this USP, so they too can convey it in their work and contact with your market. For example, if your USP is built around your customer service, then your customer service staff must be sure to convey this USP in all their contacts with prospects and customers.

Now that you have your USP, use it! Use it on your sale page, on your blog, in your emails, on social media, and everywhere else that you communicate with prospects and customers.

**4. Your First 100 Members Checklist**

There’s nothing worse than launching a new membership site to the sound of crickets. That’s why you’ll want to launch with a bang and start taking orders the day you launch. Use this checklist guide to get your first 100 members…

**Create an Affiliate Program**

Here are the steps you need to take:

**Step 1: Set Up Your Program**

This step includes these sub-steps:

* Decide what commission rate you’ll offer to affiliates (generally 50%, residual commissions).
* Determine if you’ll offer any other perks, especially to super affiliates and other special partners. (E.G., co-promotions.)
* Choose how you’ll set up your affiliate program. You might run your affiliate program through a processor like ClickBank.com. Or you might set up the program using your favorite processor (like PayPal) and a script such as Amember.com

Next…

**Step 2: Stock Your Affiliate Center**

Now you need to create content for your affiliates to use to promote your membership site. These materials include:

* Rebrandable report.
* Autoresponder series.
* Solo email(s).
* Blog posts.
* Social media posts.
* Graphical ads (e.g., banners and buttons).

Next…

**Step 3: Send Invitations to Affiliates**

Now that your affiliate program is ready to roll, it’s time to recruit affiliates. Here’s how:

* Promote your affiliate program to your platforms (blog, social media, newsletter).
* Seek out affiliates directly and send invitations. You can find affiliates by:
  + Looking for top vendors on sites like ClickBank.com and JVZoo.com.
  + Seeing who owns the top blogs and sites in your niche (search Google).
  + Checking who owns the top social media pages in your niche.
  + Searching for affiliate contests to see who wins them in your niche.

*TIP: It’s easier to get an affiliate to say yes to your request if you build a relationship with that person first.*

Here’s a sample email you might send…

Subject: Up to [$x] per sale and [$x] every month… (see inside)

Hi [First Name],

It’s [your name] here from [your site], and I’m writing to personally invite you to an affiliate opportunity that puts up to [$x] in your pocket per sale, with ongoing residual commissions of [$x] per month!

It’s a brand new membership site called [name], and I know your prospects, followers and customers will love it because [reason why it will appeal to that audience].

But don’t take my word for it – please feel free to review the site for free by logging in here: [link]

Username: [username]

Password: [password]

Once you look around, I know you’re really going to like what you see. That’s why I urge you to use the affiliate link included inside your account to start promoting the offer immediately. Here’s what you get when you join our elite group of affiliates today:

[Insert all perks in a bulleted list, including commission rate and amount on the frontend and backend, access marketing materials, co-promotions, and any other special perks you’re offering affiliates.]

So please take a look around at the link above to see for yourself that a great money-making opportunity this is. And if you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at [contact info].

[sign off]

P.S. I hope to see you on board!

== End Sample

Bottom line, starting an affiliate program is one of the better ways to get on the road to your first 100 members. Here’s the next idea…

**Promote On Your Platforms**

Naturally, you should build anticipation and promote heavily to your own platforms. This includes:

* Your mailing list.
* Your blog.
* Your social media platforms, including Facebook (Pages and groups), Twitter, and YouTube.com.

Create at least five articles and/or videos for each of these platforms to extoll identify a problem, introduce your site as the solution, and then extoll the benefits of your site.

Next…

**Do Guest Blogging**

Another good way to start bringing in traffic that you can convert to members is by guest blogging. Here’s an overview checklist of how to do it:

* Search for suitable blogs that accept guest articles. Use Google to search for your niche keywords alongside words such as “guest articles,” “guest blogging” and “submit articles.” E.G., “dog training guest blogging.”
* Submit some of your best content. Be sure your article:
  + Leads with an attention-getting, benefit-driven and/or curiosity arousing title.
  + Keeps and holds attention through engaging content (humor, stories, conversational tone).
  + Provides useful, actionable content.
  + Matches the other content on the blog in terms of topic, style, and formatting.
  + Relates directly to the content of your membership site, so that people who enjoy your article will naturally want to be a member of your site.

TIP: Read and follow the submission guidelines carefully before submitting anything.

* Include a byline with a call to action and a link pointing back to your site.

*TIP: Your link can point directly to your membership site sales letter. However, to increase conversions it can point to your lead page instead. That way you can capture leads on your list and follow up to close the sale.*

Next…

**Purchase Advertising**

Finally, you can round out the list of your first 100 members by bringing them in through paid advertising. This includes:

* Placing ads on Facebook.
* Using Google AdWords with highly targeted keywords to generate leads.
* Placing site ads or solo ads directly on niche sites.

As always, you’ll likely get better conversions if you drive traffic to a lead page (and then close the sale via follow up emails).

**In Sum…**

Getting your first 100 members isn’t difficult, but you do need to take consistent steps to get the sales coming in and to keep them coming in. That means you need to make it a daily priority to take steps towards getting new members, such as posting on social media, recruiting new affiliates, or finding new places to advertise.

Keep in mind too that sending traffic to a lead page first will help you salvage traffic and it boosts your conversions. So put this strategy to work for you today to give your membership site a jump start!

**5. The Membership Site Content Calendar Checklist**

One of the requirements of running a membership site is that you’re going to need to create a lot of content. This is particularly true if you run a traditional monthly membership site, where you need to create new content on a regular basis. But this holds true even if you’re running a one-off payment vault site or fixed-term membership site, because at the very least you should be contacting your members weekly by email to offer them additional offers and solutions.

All of this can feel a little overwhelming if you’re new to running a membership site. Fortunately, you can make the whole process a lot easier by using this content calendar checklist. Take a look…

**Step 1: Determine How Much Content You’ll Need**

The first step is to figure out exactly what you’ll need for the next six to twelve months. Ask yourself these questions:

* How much content will you need in terms of lessons, reports or other products? HINT: Depending on your membership site model, you may be offering new content as often as once per week, or at a minimum of once per month.
* How much content will you need for your mailings? Generally, you should plan on emailing your lists at least once per week.
* How much content will you need for bonus products? If you’re sending member-retaining bonus reports or similar products, be sure to note them on your list.
* How much content will you need for other activities, such as posting on members-only forums? Again, the minimum here would be once weekly, but may be as often as daily.

For example, you may decide that for the next six months (24 weeks), you’re going to create the following content for your site:

* 24 training modules, which you deliver one every week.
* An email that you send every week to announce the new module as well as promote a related offer (24 total emails).
* Three bonus reports and three bonus videos (six total), which you deliver on a monthly basis to retain members.

The above questions will help you determine how much regular content you need just to run your membership site. However, you may need extra content to promote offers on the backend. So answer these questions:

* What other related offers will you promote to your audience?
* Will you be launching any new products?
* Will you be holding any special sales, like a flash sale or dime sale?
* Will you be running a contest, offering a webinar, or any other special event?
* What products and services will your partners be launching (that you’ll want to promote)?
* What holidays or other events do you wish to observe?
* What other time periods are important to your niche? (E.G., New Years is a good time for those wishing to stop smoking to make a resolution.)

While you’re brainstorming and answering the questions, write down any other event or activity that you may want to write to your customers about.

Next…

**Step 2: Decide How You’ll Create The Content**

Next, you need to decide whether to create this content yourself or hire a freelancer to create it for you. Take note that you may do a combination. For example, you may decide to write the emails yourself, but hire a freelancer to create the lessons (or vice versa).

**Step 3: Define Your Time Frames**

Now that you know who’s creating the content, you need to figure out how long it will take to create each piece. Specifically:

* Determine how long it will take you to create the pieces you intend to produce yourself. Then whatever date you determine as your deadline, add in a cushion of several days to account for problems, content that takes longer than you thought, illness, etc.
* Find out the turnaround time for those pieces being created by freelancers. Again, add in a cushion on what the freelancers tell you as their estimated delivery dates.

NOTE: Life happens. A freelancer misses a deadline, you get sick and miss a deadline, etc. That’s why you’ll want to build a cushion into your content calendar. Plan so that you’re always at least a month ahead in terms of content creation, so that you never accidentally miss a deadline with your customers (which can destroy your credibility and trustworthiness).

And finally…

**Step 4: Develop Your Calendar**

Now that you know exactly what kind of content you need and how long it will take to create it, it’s time to develop your calendar. List the following on your calendar:

* The exact day you intend to complete each piece of content (or the day your freelancer will complete it). Again, aim to complete each piece at least a month before you intend to deliver it to your customers.
* The exact days you intend to work on the pieces you want to create yourself. Be sure to assign not only the exact days, but the number of hours you’ll work. That way you don’t accidentally schedule something else over your work time, such as a dentist appointment.
* The exact days you intend to deliver each piece of content. If the content is somewhat flexible (e.g., it can be delivered any time within a two week period), then note this on your calendar. In general, it’s a good idea to deliver flexible content earlier rather than later, as that gives you a chance to send out a reminder near the end of the time period.

**In Sum…**

Ever heard the saying, “If you fail to plan, then you’re planning to fail?” That saying definitely applies to running a membership site, which is why you’ll want to plan out your content creation and delivery calendar at least six to twelve months ahead of time. And you just reviewed the checklist that shows you how to do it, so put this tool to work for you today!

**6. The Membership Site Shortcuts Checklist**

If you’re looking for ways to make running your membership site faster and easier than ever before, than look no further than this shortcuts checklist! You’ll want to take a look right now, and then put these ideas to work for you as soon as possible…

**Shortcut 1: Automate Your Site**

The beauty of running a membership site is that there are plenty of tools you can use to automate your site. This includes:

* Using a membership site script. If you use a full-featured script such as WishList or Amember, then you can do everything from manage members to schedule content effortlessly.
* Setting up an autoresponder. If you’re running a vault site or fixed-term membership site, then you may opt to use an autoresponder to deliver content. You can upload evergreen content to your autoresponder and let your membership site run on autopilot.
* Creating a hands-free affiliate program. If you use a platform like ClickBank.com, then you don’t even have to worry about cutting checks since the provider takes care of everything.

Here’s another shortcut…

**Shortcut 2: Create Content Faster and Easier**

As a membership site owner, you’re going to need to create a lot of high-quality content for your members on an ongoing basis. Fortunately, you can make this process faster and easier in a variety of ways, including:

* Outsource content creation. Go to a freelancing site like Upwork.com or Guru.com to find competent freelancers to create all or part of your products, emails, articles, videos and other content for you.
* Crowdsource content creation. Still another way to create content fast is by getting other experts in your niche to create it for you. For example, you can invite experts to do webinars with you. Not only do you get the opportunity to present your members with a high-value live event, but you can distribute the replays/recordings for months or years to come.

Here’s another shortcut…

**Shortcut 3: Pick Your Model Carefully**

Simply put, some membership site models require less content than others. And some types of content may be easier for you to create than other types. So if you plan a membership site where content creation is fast and easy, then you’re building a shortcut right into your business model.

Specifically:

* Vault-style sites, fixed-term sites, and peer support sites require less content than the traditional monthly membership sites.
* Some membership site owners find it easier to create “talking head” videos as opposed to reports or other text content. If this is true for you too, then you may elect to deliver training videos rather than text lessons.

Here’s the next idea…

**Shortcut 4: Get Members To Spread The Word**

Some of your best site “evangelists” are going to be your existing members. That’s why you’re going to want to do two things:

1. Make it easy for members to tell others about your site.
2. Encourage or even incentivize existing members to tell their friends.

Here are tips for growing your site through word-of-mouth marketing:

* Include social media share buttons on your site, along with call to action to use those buttons.
* Offer members a free product or even a free month in your site if they share the sales page link on their social media pages.

*TIP: You can automate this by using a social sharing tool such as a tell a friend script, or an app like SocialShareMonkey.com.*

* Start a referral program. You can give members discounts and free months in your membership site for every X number of paying members they send your way. As an added perk, give the referrals an introductory discount too.

*TIP: Alternatively, you can encourage your members to join your affiliate program, which will let them earn cash for every paying member they refer to your site.*

And finally…

**Shortcut 5: Focus On Member Retention**

Some marketers use a “churn and burn” membership site model, which is a lot of work since you need to constantly find new members. That’s why focusing on member retention can make it faster and easier for you to grow your membership site. Because not only do existing members pay frontend membership fees, they also buy products on the backend AND tell their friends about your site.

Here are three ways to improve member retention:

* Start a loyalty program. The idea is to give “points” to customers for every month that your member remains a member, as well as for every product they buy on the backend. Members can then exchange these points for discounts, free months in your membership sites, or even gift cards to restaurants or popular sites like Amazon.
* Offer ongoing bonuses. You may give your members a new bonus every month, every two months or every three months. Be sure that you’re offering your best products as these bonuses, as this will keep your members excited to remain members just so they can get the next bonus.
* Create continuity with your content. Obviously you should provide REALLY good content to keep members satisfied. But you also want to provide continuity between lessons so that the information builds on previous months, and members eagerly anticipate upcoming content.

E.G., “Stay tuned for next week’s lesson, where you’ll get the fifth and final strategy for doubling your conversion rates fast – this is the best one yet, so don’t miss it!”

**In Sum…**

A lot of people never get beyond planning a membership site, because they assume it’s going to be a lot of work. You can reduce the work and make running and growing your membership site faster and easier than ever by using the strategies outlined above. So put these ideas to work for you today, because you may be amazed at how well they work!

**7. The Membership Site Setup Checklist**

You have a niche. You have a plan. Now it’s time to get your site set up and ready to take orders. Let’s walk through the process together with this super-useful checklist…

**Step 1: Secure a Domain Name**

The first thing you need to do is choose a name for your site and then purchase the corresponding domain name. Let me share with you a few pointers:

* Be sure it’s relevant. It should tell your visitors a little something about what the site is about. For example, if your site has to do with dog training, then the words “dog” or “dog training” should appear somewhere in the name.
* Choose something memorable/brandable. As you learned above, the name should be relevant. But of course you have some leeway here, and it’s this leeway that makes the name brandable.

For example, you can have fun with a dog-related sit by using a word like “Fido,” which is associated with dogs. Or you might refer to your membership site as a “doghouse.”

* Select a .com name. Not only are .com names more memorable, they’re more credible too (especially when compared to the lesser-known extensions such a “.info” or “.biz.”

Here are some naming ideas to get you started:

1. Combine a niche word with “fantastic.” E.G., “Birdtastic.”
2. Combine a niche word with “doctor.” E.G., “CarDoctor.”
3. Combine a niche word with “specialist” or “master.” E.G., “CopySpecialist.”
4. Combine a niche word with “authority.” E.G., “ArthritisAuthority.”
5. Combine a niche word with “world.” E.G., “MarathonWorld.”
6. Combine “everything” with a niche word. E.G., “EverythingCats.”
7. Combine a niche word with “magic.” E.G., “TrafficMagic.”
8. Use alliteration. E.G., “CustomerConversions.”
9. Use your name and a niche keyword. E.G., “JoeBlowFishing.”

Once you pick your name, register it through a reputable company such as NameCheap.com, and then move onto the next step…

**Step 2: Select Hosting**

Next, you need to get hosting through a reputable company, and preferably not the same company where you registered your domain name. Reputable companies include:

* HostGator.com
* BlueHost.com
* JustHost.com
* InMotionHosting.com
* LiquidWeb.com

Choose any of the above, or go with your own trusted host. Once you get an account, then be sure to change your domain’s DNS (domain nameserver) over to those given to you by your webhost. Here’s how to do it if you registered your name with NameCheap: <http://support.hostgator.com/articles/how-to-change-name-servers-with-namecheap/>.

Next…

**Step 3: Set Up Your Site**

This step consists of multiple sub-steps. Use this list to guide you through the process…

***Set Up Your Platform***

Next up, you need to choose and set up your platform. Specifically:

*Traditional membership site*: For this type of site, you’ll need to purchase and install a membership site script, such as Amember.com or EasyMemberPro.com. (See the associated checklist for more info about different platforms.)

While the instructions will vary depending on the platform, generally here’s what you’ll do:

* Be sure your web host possesses the requirements needed to run the script.
* Download the software/script files to your local hard drive.
* Unpack the zip file.
* Upload all the files (in binary mode) to your server using FTP to your public\_html root directory.
* Go to the installation URL given to you by the software provider.
* Follow the instructions at the link to complete installation.
* As needed, use your FTP tool (such as CuteFTP.com) to change the file permissions. (The installation instructions will tell you if this is needed.)

*TIP: Check with the vendor to see if they offer free installations. If they don’t and you need some help, then ask them about paid installations.*

*Fixed-term membership site*: If you’re running a fixed-term membership site, then you can deliver all the content via an autoresponder. Here’s what you’ll need to do:

* Select a reputable autoresponder service such as Aweber.com, GetResponse.com or iContact.com.
* Create your content and upload the videos, reports, lessons, etc. to your website. For example, lesson 1 might be a .pdf located at a hard-to-guess link such as: yourdomain.com/ad94wlla38/lesson1.pdf.
* Craft emails to announce each new lesson, which will include the download link for that lesson. If you have several downloads to offer, then you can send members to a download page instead (e.g., yourdomain.com/ad94wlla38/lesson1.html).
* Create a new autoresponder by following the instructions inside your autoresponder provider’s documentation.
* Upload your emails to your autoresponder, and set them to go out at weekly intervals (or however often you send content to members). The first email should be sent to members immediately after they join.
* Create a thank you/registration page where new members will land after they complete payment. This registration page will instruct them to join your mailing list to begin receiving content. Include an opt-in form on this page.

*TIP: See your autoresponder’s documentation for instructions on how to create an opt-in form and have it appear on your site. Most major providers give you opt-in form templates, so you can create a professional form without coding anything.*

* Double check that everything works.

Next…

***Choose a Payment Processor***

Now you need to select your payment processor. Options include:

* PayPal.com
* ClickBank.com
* Stripe.com
* 2Checkout.com

And similar providers. If you’re using a membership site script, be sure your chosen provider integrates with the script.

***Create a Sales Letter***

Your final step is to create a persuasive sales letter, and then insert your payment button at the end of this sales letter. Your payment provider will give you complete instructions for performing this step.

**One Last Check…**

Let’s review the steps:

* Get a domain name and hosting, and point your domain nameservers to your new web host.
* Select and set up a platform for your membership site.
* Select a compatible payment processor.
* Create a payment button and insert it into your sales letter.
* Create a thank you/registration page where people will go after they complete payment. (Here they will sign up for your autoresponder or register through your membership site script.)
* Upload your content to your member’s area or other web link.
* Upload content to your autoresponder, where applicable.

Be sure to have a few people run through the entire process to be sure it all works without a hitch before you officially launch your site!

**8. The Membership Site Pricing Checklist**

One of the big decisions you’ll need to make when it comes to your membership site is how much you’re going to charge. While it’s tempting to pluck a price out of thin air, that’s not a strategy that’s going to put the most profit in your pocket. Instead, use this checklist guide to determine the best and most profitable pricing strategy for your membership site…

**Define Your Pricing Strategy**

The first thing you need to do is determine your overall pricing strategy. Ask yourself these questions:

* Will you install an affiliate program? If so, then you need to consider these two things:

1. Affiliates won’t promote if it’s not worth their time. So with that in mind, you need to set a price (and a commission) that gives your affiliates enough money to motivate them.
2. How much profit do you want on the frontend? You should be giving your affiliates a minimum of 50%. Be sure your share of the commissions fits in with your profit strategy.

* How does your USP (unique selling proposition) factor into your pricing strategy? For example, have you positioned yourself as a low price leader? If so, you might offer memberships for $7 to $15 per month.

Or maybe you’ve positioned your site as one offering advanced information or “luxury” goods. In that case, you may charge higher prices. For instance, an elite mastermind entrepreneurial group may cost $500 to $1000 per month.

If you’ve positioned yourself on value, then you need to be sure your pricing matches other sites in your niche while offering more bang for the buck.

* How does your pricing strategy fit in with your overall business plan? Here’s a hint: up to 75% of your income can come through the backend of your business. So you want to find a pricing scheme that brings you the highest conversions and retention rate, as this gives you more members and more income on the backend.

Next…

**Do Your Market Research**

Now that you’ve done some thinking about what you hope to accomplish with your pricing strategy, it’s time to find out what others in your site are charging for similar goods and services. You can run a Google search for your niche keywords (e.g., “dog training membership,” as well as searching marketplaces such as ClickBank.com.

Take note of the following:

* Pricing for similar offers. What are others charging for memberships in your niche?
* Pricing for related offers. This is how much others are charging for the types of products you offer in your membership site. For example, if you offer video modules delivered over time, how much do others charge for similar video courses (even if they’re delivered all at once)?

What you’ll generally find is a range of prices from low to high, with MOST prices being in a much smaller range.

For example, you might find memberships ranging from $10 to $50 in your niche, with most sites right around the $15 to $25 range (this is the median range). Your USP and profit strategy will help you decide whether to price on the low end or high end. When in doubt, you might start your pricing within the median range.

**Consider Tiered Pricing**

The next thing you need to determine is whether you’ll have different prices for different levels of membership.

HINT: when you use this pricing strategy, lead your prospect to the price point you want them to choose. For example, if you want them to choose Silver, then offer WAY more value in the silver membership over bronze, but charge just a little more money for it. Savvy shoppers will see the value and snap up the Silver membership.

For example:

Bronze membership: $10 per month

Silver membership: $15 per month

Gold membership: $25 per month

**Offer Charter Memberships**

The next factor to consider is whether you’ll offer early birds a reduced-cost charter membership. This is a great pricing strategy to bring people in the door right away by invoking scarcity.

For example: “Lock in your charter membership now for just $10 per month. But hurry, once these first 100 charter memberships are gone, the monthly prices double to $20 per month…”

**Justify Your Price**

Now once you decide on a price, you need to justify it in your sales copy. That’s because if it’s a high price, people will think they can’t afford it. If it’s a low price, they’ll think the membership is junk. So either way, justify the price.

Let’s take the example of two PLR sites:

High price example: If you purchased this premium content from a ghostwriter, you’d pay 10X this price. But if you act now, you can license the rights to this exceptional content for just $97 per month…

Low price example: Act now, and you can lock in the low price of just $10 per month. I’ve purposely made this site affordable so that even beginning marketers can get their hands on this content, because I know what it’s like to struggle when you’re first starting out. So I’m giving you a hand up just like my mentor did when I first started…

And finally…

**Conclusion: One Final Step**

If you follow all the steps above, you’re going to come up with a profitable pricing strategy. But don’t forget, the only way to tell for sure if a price is working for you is by testing and tracking your prices. So do a split test to find out which membership price brings you the most profit both on the frontend and backend. The results might surprise you!

**9. The Membership Conversion Checklist**

Getting traffic to your site isn’t enough – you need to persuade these visitors to crack open their wallets and become paying member. So how do you do that? By using this membership conversion checklist.

Let’s get started…

**Polish Your Sales Letter**

The first thing you need to do to turn prospects into members is to make sure you have a highly persuasive sales letter in place.

*TIP: If you don’t know anything about writing good sales copy, then you may consider hiring a professional copywriter and conversion expert to polish your sales letter. Search for a copywriter using Google, or check a freelancing site such as* [*www.upwork.com*](http://www.upwork.com)*.*

Ask yourself these questions:

* Does your headline present a big benefit and/or arouse curiosity?
* Does the opener of your letter really “grab” prospects with a story, a question, a startling statistic, or even intriguing questions aimed at identifying the problem?
* Do you explain how your solution (your membership site) is better than and different from other related products and services?
* Do you offer a bulleted list of benefit statements that build value for the offer and let prospects know why they should join?
* Do you offer proof of your claims, such as testimonials, case studies, before and after photos, screenshots, scans and other relevant evidence?
* Do you justify the price?
* Do you provide a strong call to action next to the order button?
* Do you create a sense of urgency so that people will buy now?
* Do you offer a strong postscript (P.S.) that reiterates a main benefit and/or offers a new benefit alongside another call to action?
* Did you format the letter for easy readability?
* Are the most important parts of the letter emphasized, such as through bolding, italics or even Johnson Boxes?
* Do you offer risk reversal (e.g., a guarantee)?
* Do you raise and then handle common objections to becoming a member?
* Does the overall offer appeal to the target market (in terms of price, how it’s positioned, and the bonuses you offer)?
* Is the overall design of the site attractive, professional and does it help build trust?

A good sales letter goes a long ways towards persuading more prospects to become members. But here’s another big factor…

**Presell Your Prospects**

Very few people will purchase your offer the first time they come in contact with it. So if you send your traffic directly to your sales page, up to 99% of them are going to leave without buying. And most of that number will NEVER come back.

So here’s what you do instead…

Create an enticing, related and highly valuable lead magnet, and offer this to your prospects in exchange for an email address. Then presell your prospect in these ways:

* Offer a lead magnet that solves part of the problem. In fact, you might even splinter off a portion of your membership site and offer it as a lead magnet.

For example, if you’re offering a fixed-term membership site with 24 video modules, you might offer one video module as your lead magnet. Then you’d provide a link and call to action at the end of the module

* Create a follow-up email series to close the sale. Again, think useful yet incomplete here. Each email should present a useful piece of information that helps solve the prospect’s problem, and each email should pitch your membership site as the solution to the rest of the problem.

Let’s imagine you’re selling access to a weight loss membership site. Your lead magnet might be a two-week set of meal plans. You’d then follow up with five emails which share the five secrets of eating to boost metabolism. While the meal plans and emails solve part of the problem, your prospect needs to join the site to get peer support, new meal plans every month, and a complete guide to burning fat.

Next…

**Present Proof**

Your prospects want to believe you, but they’re mighty skeptical. They have the niggling thought: “This won’t work for me.” What you need to do is counter that objection by offering proof that joining your membership site will solve their problems.

Now as mentioned earlier, you can present that proof within your sales letter. You can also:

* Send it to your email list.
* Blog about it.
* Post on your social media platforms.

For example, you might post a case study on social media. Or you might post a video with several testimonials on your blog.

Next…

**Proffer Free Or Low-Cost Trials**

Still another way to turn an interested prospect into a buyer is by giving them an enticing peek inside your membership site for free, or even at very low cost. Once they see all the good stuff inside, you can bet they’ll want to become members.

For example:

* Offer a free trial for one week.
* Offer a $1 trial for the first month.

Naturally, you’ll send emails to those who take advantage of your free trial and encourage them to upgrade to the full membership.

And finally…

**Prepare Excerpted Content**

Even if you don’t offer a free trial, you can still give your prospects a sneak peek at the content by offering them excerpts. Once someone gets a taste of the quality of content you offer, they’ll want to buy a membership.

Here are ways to do this:

* Send a link to a video excerpt to your mailing list.
* Take a list of tips from your content and post them on social media.
* Splinter off part of your membership site to offer as a lead magnet/freemium.
* Post an article-length excerpt on your blog.

By the time prospects reach the end of your excerpt, they should be impressed and eager to get inside the membership site to get their hands on all your content and solutions.

**Conclusion**

A lot of membership marketers see a lot of traffic coming into their site, but the traffic doesn’t convert into paying members. You can avoid this problem by using the checklist above!

**10. The Member Retention Checklist**

It’s exciting when members start joining your site and you see all those membership payments pouring into your PayPal account. But it’s a huge punch in the gut when you see a large number of cancellation notices hitting your account. And it’s also a big loss of both frontend and backend revenue if you can’t retain your members. So save yourself some time and start making more money with this member retention checklist…

**Provide Good Solutions**

This one is obvious – if you want members to stick around, then you need to offer high-quality content that solves their problems. ‘Nuff said.

**Write a “Stick” Letter**

When people first land inside your membership site, they may be a little overwhelmed by all the materials. This is especially true if you’re offering a vault site or other well-stocked membership. So what you need to do is write a “stick” letter or provide a video tour which shows them around the site and lets them know how to make the most of their membership.

Related to that…

**Provide a Quick Start Guide**

Your members want to hit the ground running and start getting results. That’s why you’ll want to provide a quick start guide that shows them the easiest and fastest way to get started.

For example, if they’ve signed up for a blogging membership site, then your quick start guide would show them how to install WordPress, customize it, and get started blogging.

**Encourage Members To Take Action**

Here’s a key: people who get good results are going to be satisfied members, and satisfied members will remain members for the long haul.

However, most of your members won’t take action right away. Some members will look at the materials but not put them to use. Others will buy a membership, but never bother logging in. So when the first renewal comes around, they’ll cancel because they’re not using the site.

That’s why you want to encourage members to take action. Send them regular emails that remind them of the benefits of the site, and then encourage them to log in and look at certain pieces and take action on what they’ve learned.

*TIP: You can assign “homework” to encourage action, and then have your members send you their homework for your feedback.*

Next…

**Create a Community**

The idea here is to offer members a place to gather with others members, such as a private forum or Facebook group. If members want to leave, then you’re not just losing out on good information – they’ll also be leaving their friends, a sense of community, and a lot of support behind.

**Build Anticipation**

Another way to improve member retention is to always let members know what’s coming up, and then build anticipation for future issues/lessons/modules.

For example: “Next week’s video module is going to show you the #1 way to boost your conversion rates – we’ve seen quadrupled rates with this strategy, so don’t miss it!”

**Present Ongoing Bonuses**

The idea behind this retention strategy is to give your loyal members exceptional ongoing bonus products as a thank you for remaining members. You may offer these high-value and in-demand bonuses every other month or every three months to those who remain members.

For example, give your marketing membership members a new app every three months, such as a conversion optimization app, an SEO app, etc.

**Showcase Successful Members**

The idea here is to give your members ongoing social proof by highlighting another member’s achievements every month. For example, if you have a weight loss site, then you might create a “Member Of the Month” feature that not only applauds the member for their great work, but serves as inspiration for others. This sort of feature creates retention not only in the person being showcased, but also in those being inspired.

**Offer Exceptional Customer Service**

One of the top reasons people become unsatisfied with a business is due to a poor customer service experience. That’s why you’ll want to make customer service a top priority so that your members have a good experience and feel valued. To that end:

* Answer all customer service inquiries fast (within an hour or two, or certainly within a business day).
* Use a help desk to manage inquiries.
* Train your staff thoroughly to provide prompt and professional help.

Next…

**Create a VIP Level of Members**

The idea here is to make members feel special, and to give them extra perks when they reach certain milestones (in terms of length of membership).

For example, you might unlock a special “VIP” level of membership to those who reach the six month or 12-month milestone. This VIP membership might include things like special bonuses, private group chats, coaching sessions or other things they really value.

**Make Them Think Twice About Quitting**

If you have a site that offers training, you might let members know that they’ll have to start at the beginning if they quit and then decide to rejoin later. You might let members know that membership fees may be higher later on, so remaining a member ensures they get to lock in a low price.

**Design a Loyalty Program**

This retention idea is built around giving your members “points” for participating in your site.

For example, you might offer points for activities such as:

* Remaining a member (e.g., they get points every month).
* Buying backend products and services.
* Telling their friends about the site.
* Participating in the private group or forum.

Then your members can exchange these points for free months of membership, free products, discounts, or even gift cards.

**Conclusion**

The math is pretty simple: the more members you have, the more money you’ll make in frontend membership fees as well as backend offers. That’s why you’ll want to make it a top priority to install a membership retention strategy that keeps members hooked, engaged and satisfied. So put this checklist to work for you from Day 1, and I think you’ll like what you see when you look at your bottom line!

**11. The Membership Monetization Checklist**

It’s fun to watch new and ongoing membership fees come into your PayPal account each and every month.

But you know what? Those frontend profits are really only a fraction of the amount of money you could be making with your membership site. In fact, many membership site owners report that 50%, 60% or even up to 75% of their income is made up on the backend of the site. In other words, they get members to purchase additional products and services.

You can do the same thing. Take a look at this membership monetization checklist…

**Part 1: Create Related Offers**

The first step is to make sure your backend offers are highly related to your membership site. It’s even better if your backend offers enhance the use and enjoyment of the content inside the membership site.

For example, let’s imagine you have a weight loss site. Backend offers may include:

* Low-calorie cookbooks.
* Meal-planning app.
* Exercise videos.
* Access to a motivation/support forum.
* Downloadable audio files with motivational music or messages for working out.
* Personal coaching/training (e.g., you design a personalized meal plan and training program for them).
* Physical products such as pre-packaged diet foods, dieting aids and supplements, and exercise equipment.

Point is, make sure that your backend offers help your members achieve their goals. These could be reports, apps, videos, audios, access to live events like webinars, done-for-you offers, physical products and more. You can also offer these products and services at a variety of price points, from “no brainer” $10 upsells to $1000 premium offer such as coaching.

Go ahead and make a list of all the possible products and services you can offer inside your membership site. Then move onto the next step…

**Part 2: Install These Offers Through Your Site**

Now that you know what you want to sell on the backend to your members, the next step is to promote these offers all throughout your site. Here’s how…

**Upsell On the Order Form**

As soon as prospects click the order button, you can offer them an upsell. This could take the form of:

* A one-time offer. If customers don’t purchase this offer now, they’ll never get a chance to buy it ever again. (Creates urgency.)
* A special add-on offer. Customers will get a special price if they order now. They can still get the product or service later if they don’t order now, but they’ll need to pay full price.

E.G., “Would you like to upgrade to a Gold Membership for just $3 more per month?”

Next…

**Place Offers On The Thank You/Confirmation Page**

This is the page your customers reach immediately after they’ve completed the purchase. Just be sure that you place access to the site at the top of this page and any additional offers at the bottom. (In other words, make it easy for people to get what they paid for.)

E.G., “The most successful members of this site invested in personal coaching to get them further, faster. Now you too can do the same thing. Click here to get started…”

**Promote Offers in Membership Site**

There are multiple places where you can promote backend offers within the membership site itself. For example:

* Create a prominent “Featured Product” space right on the login page, so members will see it first thing whenever they visit the site.
* Offer a “Recommended Resources” section that includes links to related offers.
* Place promos in forums and in private groups.
* Insert offer on the members-only blog. (You can do this within the content, in the sidebar, or even as a pinned post at the top of the blog.)

Next…

**Insert Offers In Products**

No matter what kind of products you’re giving to your members, you can insert offers inside them. This includes:

* Within text products. You can insert “recommended resources” sections in ebooks, featured ads right in the beginning of the product, soft-sell recommendations within the product, and/or promos at the end of the product.
* In the dashboard of apps, plugins and software. You may even give customers the lite version of an app as a bonus, and then encourage then to upgrade to the full (paid) version.
* Within videos, audios and live events such as webinars. Be sure to promote the benefits of the offer and then relay the link and a call to action.
* Inside individual tools, like checklists, mind maps and cheat sheets. Be succinct with your benefit statement, link and call to action.

… And in all other content and products you offer to members. Be sure to do this in both your regular products as well as any bonuses you offer.

**Send Offers Via Email**

One of the most effective places to sell products and services is through the emails you send to your members. For example:

* Insert promos in your initial thank-you/confirmation email.
* Write a “stick letter” and point to the recommended resource section of the membership site.
* Feature a product every time you send an email announcing that there is new membership content available.
* Create a multi-part email series that’s designed to teach your members how to do some process, and include a link to a related offer in each email. For example, a five-part series about email marketing might promote a specific autoresponder.
* Send solo emails from time to time (such as once per month or so). Choose a featured product each month and send a direct promo to your members. You don’t want to do this too often (more than once per month), as members will start feeling like they paid to get advertisements, which won’t make them very happy.

… And any other time you send an email.

**In Sum**

Whenever you have a chance to communicate with your members, you also have a chance to promote a related offer. If you’re providing great content and solid recommendations, then you members will grow to trust you… and in turn, that will solidify member retention and create even more backend revenue.

**12. The Membership Site Launch Checklist**

When your membership site is ready to go, you can start planning your big launch. Use the checklist below to ensure you have a smooth, successful and profitable launch…

**Be Sure Your Site Is Ready**

The first thing you need to do is be sure your site is indeed ready for your members. Check these points:

* Is your sales letter persuasive? Be sure your sales letter is polished and ready to go. If you’re not proficient in writing sales copy, you may want to hire a professional copywriter.

*TIP: The best way to tell if your sales letter converts is by testing it. You may want to run pre-launch tests by driving traffic via Facebook ads and Google AdWords. That way, you can boost conversions and give your marketing partners conversion rates when you’re recruiting them.*

* Does your autoresponder work? Test the opt-in form as well as checking that your emails are delivered on your preferred timeline, and are formatted to be read easily on all devices. If you’re using HTML, be sure to use a responsive design.
* Does your payment button work? Run a test purchase to be sure a completed purchase sends the customer to the correct page (where they can register and log into their membership account).

*TIP: If you are planning a big launch, you may want to inform your payment processor about the expected influx of payments. Otherwise, your processor may freeze your account due to suspicious activity.*

* Does your membership site script work? Be sure it’s integrated with your payment processor, and that it correctly handles new registrations, cancellations and other issues.
* Is your customer service platform ready to go? Where applicable, be sure your help desk script works, and any email addresses, telephone numbers or other points of contact work.
* Is your site server ready for the influx? It’s a good idea to hire a web developer who’s experienced with database and server maintenance and security to be sure your site is ready for the increased traffic load, and ready to handle sensitive data.
* Do you offer a launch-week special? You can increase conversions by offering charter memberships, low-cost trials, or other special introductory pricing schemes to your prospects.

Next step…

**Motivate Your Affiliates**

*NOTE: If you need help setting up your affiliate program and recruiting marketing partners, please refer to the Your First 100 Members Checklist.*

You already have a team of affiliates ready to promote – what you need to do now is motivate them. Here’s how:

* Hold an affiliate contest. This is one of the best ways to motivate affiliates, especially if you offer large and attractive prizes, such as cash or gift cards. You can offer prizes to the top five affiliates to make the most sales during the contest period, as well as offering smaller random-draw prizes that are available to anyone who makes at least one sale. This motivates even the smallest affiliate to get out and promote.
* Give them coupons to distribute. Affiliates like to offer coupons to their customers, as coupons tend to increase conversion rates.
* Provide them with new marketing materials. The idea here is to keep affiliates motivated by making it really easy for them to promote your site. You can do this by regularly offering new promo materials such as emails, social media blurbs, videos, rebrandable reports, graphics and more.
* Send motivational emails. You can remind them of what sort of commissions they’ll earn, as well as the conversion rates on your sales letter. You can also highlight successful affiliates as case studies to motivate those who haven’t started promoting yet.
* Make yourself available for interviews. Affiliates can interview you on webinars, teleseminars or even via text interviews, and then distribute this content with their affiliate links to generate sales.

Next…

**Build Excitement Around Your Launch**

The idea here is to presell your audience (and your affiliates’ prospects) in advance of the launch date. To that end, you’ll want to build up your platforms – such as your mailing list and social media networks – in advance of the launch, so that you have a waiting audience. And secondly, you’ll want to build anticipation and excitement around your launch.

You do this by sending out a series of social media posts, blog posts and emails to your prospects in the week or two leading up to the launch. This series may look something like this:

* Email 1: Identify the problem and give your prospects part of the solution in the form of a freemium.
* Email 2: Introduce your site as the solution to the rest of the problem. Build anticipation for the upcoming launch by sharing the benefits of the site.
* Email 3: Offer proof of your claims, including social proof (such as case studies and testimonials from beta users).
* Email 4: Launch day – recap the main benefits and offer a call to action. Create urgency with a low-priced “charter membership” offer. This charter membership offer may be good during the launch week only, OR you may cap it according to membership numbers (e.g., good for the first 200 members only, and then the price increases).
* Email 5: Day after launch… mention member numbers as a way to use social proof to drive more sales. E.G., “173 smart novelists have already joined this membership site and are raving about it. Join them today to find out what’s getting everyone so excited!”

Also, remind prospects of the special pricing for charter members.

You can then offer an email per day during the initial launch week which shares testimonials, reminds prospects of the introductory offer, and shares your site’s USP (unique selling proposition).

**Conclusion**

The best way to make sure your launch goes smoothly is use this checklist to ensure you have all your ducks in a row. Don’t forget: if you need help with the actual marketing aspect, check the checklist included in this package that shows you how to get your first 100 members.

**13. The Membership Community-Building Checklist**

If you want to build a profitable site, then you need to engage and retain your members. One good way to do this is by building a community. When people feel like they belong to something bigger than themselves – when they feel like part of a community – they’ll get more value from your site, which in turn leads to fewer cancellations.

So how do you build this sort of thriving community? By using this checklist…

**Make Members Feel Like They’re Part of Something**

When a member joins your site, they don’t want to just lay money down and become a “number” inside the membership site. Instead, they want to feel like they’re part of something bigger. They want to feel like they’re part of a community. They want to feel like they’re part of an elite group.

If you need a good example of this, look at strong brands like Apple. Apple fans will line up around the block when a new product gets released. They join fan forums. They have a sense of belonging within the community, and often insiders feel a sense of superiority when they look at outsiders who don’t use Apple products.

You can help foster a similar feeling among your own members through your choice of branding and wording within your site. Specifically:

* Foster a sense of belonging. You can make members feel like they are insiders by giving them a special name.

For example, if your membership site focuses on weight loss, you might refer to your members as “Fat Busters” or “Weight Loss Warriors.” You want members to identify with the chosen name and be proud to call themselves by that name.

* Make members feel special. Make them feel like insiders. Show then how they’re different (and better) than those who aren’t members.

For example: “You’re smarter than the average marketer, and you’re about to discover secret strategies that 99% of other marketers don’t know…”

* Give long-time members special perks and even special names. In other words, reward people for retaining membership, and give them special status as senior members.

For example, if you have a dog training site, you might call the newest members “Puppies,” (which only lasts for a month or two), the mid-length members “Big Dogs,” and the senior members the “Pack Leaders.”

* Rally members around a related cause. You might donate part of your proceeds to a specific cause, and encourage members to be activists in the field. You might share with members news of this cause and how they can help.

For example, if you have a dog training site, you might choose a cause such as supporting no-kill shelters, banning the Asian dog meat trade, or even loosening restrictions on bully breeds.

Next…

**Offer a Forum or Group**

A private members only forum or Facebook group is a great way to build a community and let members interact with each other. And as an added bonus, it increases member retention, because members don’t want to lose access to the support and their newfound friends.

Of course the key to success with this strategy is that you need to get members engaged and posting. The more “invested” people are in the forum or group, the more likely it is that they’ll stick around for the long run.

So how do you engage members? We’ll cover that in the next point…

**Engage Your Members**

If you want to build a sense of community, then your goal should be to engage members both within your group/forum as well as outside of it. To that end, here is how to get your members active all around your membership site:

* Ask questions. This is a good way to draw people out so they start interacting. You can ask questions in your member newsletter, on your member blog, and within your group or forum.

For example, you can share two sides of a controversial topic, and then ask, “What do you think?”

Or you can ask your members to share their favorite tips, strategies, frustrations, stories, photos, etc. For example, you can ask bodybuilders, “What is your most embarrassing gym story?”

* Interact with members. A community is about a dialogue among you and members, not a monologue. That’s why you’ll want to personally interact within the community. This means answering questions in the group, “liking” replies and comments from group members, and generally showing members that you appreciate and value their contributions to the community.
* Solicit feedback. This is something you can do privately, such as having people email you with their feedback, or you can request that people share their feedback and ideas publicly. But either way, your members will feel special and they’ll engage if you genuinely ask for feedback on an issue—and then apply their feedback where applicable.

For example, you might ask questions such as:

* + Who would you like to see as the next webinar guest?
  + How can I make this membership better and more useful for you?
  + What prizes would you like to see in an upcoming contest?
  + What sort of bonus product would appeal to you?
  + What features do you want included on this brand new app?
* Offer points for participation. In other words, “bribe” your members to engage on your site by posting in your group, commenting on your members only blog, offering private feedback to you, etc. For every activity your members participate in, give them “points” which are exchangeable for other products and services

**Parting Thoughts**

As you can see, building a community isn’t just about installing a forum or starting a closed Facebook group and calling it a day. It’s about making your members feel like they’re a part of something bigger than themselves, making them feel like their part of an elite or inner circle, making them feel special and valued, and giving them a sense of belonging. If you follow the strategy outlined above, you too will be able to foster this sense of community that bonds your members to your site.

**14. The Members-Only Content Checklist**

As you’re setting up your membership site, one of your big priorities is to create content that keeps your members coming back for more. Your marketing research will help you determine what topics are in-demand in your niche. And this checklist is your key to delivering this content in the formats that your members will love.

Check it out…

**Answered Questions**

The reason sites like Quora.com are so popular is because people love to ask questions and get solid answers, particularly from experts.

Why?

Because simply searching for information online is a huge chore. You need to read countless pages just to find the answer. And then you need to determine which content is reliable and which isn’t. What’s more, you’ll also get conflicting information, even among experts. And that’s why your members will love getting solid, straight-forward answers from you on topics of interest.

You can do this multiple ways, including:

* Doing your market research to determine popular topics in your niche, and then creating a FAQ based on these topics.
* Soliciting questions from your members, which you answer in a weekly “Ask the Expert” feature on your member blog, forum or newsletter. Or you might even offer it as a downloadable report.
* Encouraging members to post their questions on the members only forum or group, which you then answer.
* Answering questions live during a group coaching session webinar

Next…

**Behind-The-Scenes Case Studies**

A lot of the content that people read details the “how to” steps of a process, but it never really gets into if or how well something will work. You can provide this information for your members in the form of a case study, which gives your members real-world results. Plus, a case study often provides strategies and tips not found inside a typical how-to article.

For example, you might offer members of a marketing site weekly case studies on how well certain pieces of a marketing campaign convert. To make it even more engaging, you can ask your members to guess which test object converted better. (E.G., Which was more profitable: Headline 1 or Headline 2?)

**Laymen Explanations**

Depending on your niche, your members may be trying to absorb some pretty high-level information such as articles posted in peer-reviewed journals. This type of content is generally written for other scholars in a particular field, so the average lay person struggles to understand the impact of the article. You can do your members a great service by explaining the content in lay terms.

For example, let’s suppose you run a weight loss membership site. A scholarly article on the topic of metabolism may discuss science terms that are unfamiliar to most people. The article may also go into details of the experiment, including the statistical result.

None of this makes sense to the lay person, who just wants to know, “How do I increase my metabolism?” You can break the article down into lay terms, with a specific emphasis on what your members can do to increase their metabolism.

Next…

**Infographics**

Another way to simplify complex, data-heavy topics is by providing the information in the form of an infographic. So instead of listing all sorts of facts and figures for your members in plain text form, you can offer visual representations of this data, which makes it easy for members to consume.

For example, you might provide an infographic that shows copywriters which parts of their sales letters to focus on in order to produce the biggest boost to increase conversions (e.g., the headline, the call to action).

**Motivational Stories**

While people want and need the “how to” information in order to start getting results, they also need a good dose of motivation to get started and keep going. You can provide this motivation in the form of motivational stories, such as article or videos highlighting successful others in the niche.

*TIP: Showcasing your own members’ success stories is really effective, as it shows what people can do with the information you provide. For example, if you have a weight-loss site, then you might showcase a member’s results after three months of following your dieting advice.*

Next idea…

**Video Demos**

Reading how to content is one thing, but seeing exactly how to perform an action is even better. That’s why you’ll want to consider offering video demos to members.

For example:

* A demo showing how to install and customize a WordPress blog.
* A demo showing how to refinish kitchen cabinets.
* A demo showing bodybuilders the right way to do squats safely.

Next…

**Tools**

Another type of content your members will really enjoy is anything that will help them take action on what they just learned. These tools may include:

* Checklists
* Worksheets
* Cheat sheets
* Planners
* Spreadsheets
* Templates
* Swipes
* Apps

And similar items.

For example, you can offer members of a blogging site items such as:

* Article templates.
* Title swipes.
* Publishing planners.
* Set up checklists.
* Niche worksheets.

And other useful tools.

Here’s another idea…

**Live Events**

People tend to place a higher perceived value on live events, and that’s especially true when the members get live access to an expert. That’s why you may consider holding live events such as webinars for your members. As an added bonus, you can offer the recordings and replays to future members.

For example:

* Invite other niche experts for interviews.
* Do group coaching sessions with your members.
* Present actionable information on specific topics of interest to your members (e.g., “how to get out of credit card debt”).

**Conclusion**

Giving good information to your members is key. But providing this information in an engaging, entertaining and easily consumable way is also important if you want your members to remain members. So engage your audience and keep them coming back for more by using the different formats you just learned in this checklist!

**15. The Membership Site Levels Checklist**

As you’re developing your membership site, one of the tasks you’ll need to give some attention to is your pricing. Market research and testing will help you determine the pricing sweet spot.

But heads up: since you’re offering a membership site, you can increase your conversions and profits by offering different membership levels. That way, each member only pays for the features and benefits they want and need. And those who see the value of the membership site are likely to upgrade to a higher level, which puts more money in your pocket.

Take a look at this membership site checklist to see if offering levels is a good fit for your site…

**Determine If Levels Make Sense**

The first thing you need to do is determine if your particular site is able to offer two or three levels to members.

*NOTE: In some cases, you may realize that you could offer four, five or more levels to your members. However, generally this isn’t a good idea. That’s because offering too many choices to prospects can actually dampen conversions. So stick with two or three levels.*

The question you need to ask yourself is if you can provide added value at the higher levels of membership to justify the price increase. Here are examples:

* A weight loss membership site offers access to a private forum at the higher membership level.
* A marketing membership site offers access to a conversion app at the higher membership level.
* A PLR membership site offers unrestricted PLR to those who opt for a higher level of membership.

Here are specific questions to ask yourself to help you determine what you can offer to members:

* What additional products can you offer higher-level members every month? In some cases, you can create a higher membership level simply by offering extra content.

For example: if you have a private label rights (PLR) site where you offer members two new ebooks per month, then you might create a higher level where members also receive a set of 20 related articles on the same topics.

* In what ways can you add value to the existing content? Depending on your site, you might be able to offer:
  + Licensing. If you’re offering content to online marketers, you can give higher-level members the rights to resell the content. If you’re providing apps or other software, you can give higher-level members a license to install the software on multiple devices. You might even offer a developer’s license so that web developers can install items such as WordPress plugins on their clients’ sites.
  + Content in a different format. For example, you might give basic members access to text content, while higher-level members get access to video modules as well.
* Can you offer live events such as webinars? You can do these webinars yourself, or you can bring in special guest experts to cover topics on their areas of expertise.
* Can you offer high-value services such as personal coaching? For example, you might offer sales letter critiques for higher-level members of a copywriting site.
* What sort of “done for you” offers can you provide? For example, you might offer higher-level members of a fitness professional site a monthly done-for-you package of training routines and meal plans for them to give to their clients.
* Are there tools you can provide to higher-level members? These are tools that help your members take action and get results, such as checklists, worksheets, cheat sheets, planners and more.
* Can you offer a group or forum? This is where you can offer peer support or even group coaching.

Set aside some time to brainstorm how to add value to your basic offer in order to create different membership levels. Then move onto the next step…

**Define Your Levels**

Once you determine what you can add to create different levels, then you need to take two additional steps.

*Step 1: Determine the Number of Levels*

As mentioned before, you should stick to two or three levels. The number you choose depends on how much value you can add to the basic offer (e.g., are you able to add enough value to create three levels? Or is it more doable to create two?).

Next…

*Step 2: Create Labels for Your Levels*

Next, you need to name your levels. The traditional way to name these levels is around metals, such as:

* Bronze, Gold and Silver levels.
* Gold, Silver and Platinum levels.

Some people put descriptive yet basic labels such as:

* Basic and Upgrade levels.
* Standard and VIP levels.
* Standard and Diamond levels.
* Regular and Preferential levels.
* Beginner and Pro levels.

Still others choose clever names based on their niche. For example:

* Puppy and Pack Leader levels.
* Copy Hack and Copy Pro levels.

If you can choose clever labels that make sense, go for it as that will help your membership stand out while also giving members a sense of community. Otherwise, any of the traditional labels will do.

*CONVERSION TIP: Be sure your highest-level members feel SPECIAL. The name should reflect it (e.g., “Diamond Members”). The sales letter should refer to the highest levels in terms of it being “exclusive” and only suitable for a “smart people who want to get great results.” The content within the site should also make them feel like they’re part of a special inner circle.*

Next…

**Designate Prices**

Now the final step is to assign prices to each membership level.

CONVERSION TIP: Assign prices in a way where the value goes up significantly at each level, but the prices don’t go up a proportionate amount.

For example, maybe you have Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, with membership fees that are $10, $20 and $30 per month respectively. However, the Gold level shouldn’t merely provide twice the value of the Bronze level – it should provide triple or quadruple the value. That way, members see that it’s a better deal to invest in a higher level membership.

**Conclusion**

Offering different membership levels is a great way to give your members control over what sort of value they get from your site. However, you can help ensure people choose your higher levels by using your sales letter to relay exclusivity, as well as pricing in a way where people realize the higher levels provide significantly more value for just a tiny bit more money.

**16. The One-Off Membership Checklist**

As you’ve already discovered, one possible model that you can choose for your membership site is the one-off membership. This is where you provide a package of content or tools, as well as ongoing access to the site to anyone who pays your one-time membership fee.

The benefit of this site for members is that they get instant access to everything. You benefit by getting full payments upfront without having to add content to the site on an ongoing basis. The other big benefit is that you get to build a list of buyers, which provides plenty of backend income opportunities.

So how do you create a profitable one-off membership site? Answer: by using the strategies outlined in this checklist…

**Stock Your Site**

What you’re going to do is create a “vault” style site of related materials. Your goal is to offer a lot of value for the money, which in turn translates into more satisfied members who’ll snap up your backend offers.

For example, you might offer a package of training materials and tools to help your members achieve a special goal. This package may include:

* Ebooks and reports.
* Videos.
* Audios.
* Checklists.
* Worksheets.
* Cheat sheets.
* Spread sheets.
* Planners / calendars.
* Apps.

And other information products and tools.

Specific example: you might have a debt-management vault site, where you provide all the tools and instruction people need to get out of debt and start saving and investing money. Your materials might include:

* A debt management manual that gives people a strategy for getting out of debt.
* A collection of worksheets, such as a worksheet that helps people determine in what order they should pay off their credit cards.
* A debt management app that helps people budget their money.
* A loan calculator.
* A set of debt management spreadsheets.
* A checklist that helps people during tax time.

Next…

**Justify Your Price**

Whatever your price point, you’re going to need to justify the price and explain to members why it’s such a great deal.

For example: “If you purchased each of these pieces separately, you’d be triple the price! But if you act now to purchase this collection together, you’ll get to take advantage of a discounted price of only $97 for everything you see on this page…”

Next…

**Create Backend Offers**

As mentioned, one of the keys to a profitable vault style is that you price your membership in a way where people can easily see they get a lot of value for the money. This ensures you get a lot of profit coming into the frontend in the way of membership fees.

The second key is to offer related products and services on the backend. Here’s where to insert these offers into your site:

* Order form upsell. For example, “Would you like to order this three-volume set of cookbooks for just $25 more?”
* On the download page/member login page. For example, “While your products are downloading, you’ll want to take a look at this set of kettlebell training videos that are designed to build strength and burn fat…”
* In the initial thank you email. In this email you can thank members for their purchase and reiterate the main benefits of the site to help ward off buyer’s remorse. You can then pitch a related product.

For example, “If you really want to make money with Facebook advertising, then hire us to create and manage profitable Facebook advertising campaigns for you…”

* In subsequent emails. You should be sending out regular weekly emails to members to remind them what’s inside the site, encourage them to take action, and provide additional information to help them solve their problems. You can then pitch a related product or service in every email.

For example: “The sales letter templates inside the membership site make creating sales letters faster and easier than ever before. And now you can get your hands on a set of press release templates to help promote your business for FREE through the local media…”

* Inside the products and bonus products. Don’t forget to add links and calls to action to related products within the materials included inside your site.

For example, if your materials explain how to set up a WordPress blog, you might offer a package of blog plugins and themes to your members within the relevant section of that report.

Next…

**Pro Tip: Design an Annual Event**

If your members love the materials you’ve provided inside the site, then they’ll be very excited to purchase a similar package of materials from you again. That’s why you’ll want to design an annual event where you create an entirely new package of materials that you can sell to existing customers as well as new prospects.

In the example above, ProfitsVault is a PLR site, which makes it easy to create new content every year. However, you don’t need to have a PLR site in order to make this strategy work for you. All you have to do is provide advanced or ongoing content on related topics.

For example, if your first package is all traffic generation, then for subsequent packages you may go in-depth into specific traffic-generation strategies such as Facebook marketing, email marketing, partner traffic, and more.

**Conclusion**

The beauty of a one-off site is that you get the equivalent of many months’ worth of membership fees in one upfront payment plus plenty of backend sales opportunities, all without the hassle of providing new content every month.

Here’s another tip: you can even repurpose existing products by compiling them to create a vault site. That makes it faster and easier than ever before to set up your vault site, so get to work planning your site today!

**17. The Membership Site Automation Checklist**

One of the beautiful things about owning an online membership site is that you can automate many of the regular tasks you need to perform to run and grow your site. And a good place to start is this automation checklists, which shows you the best way to take advantage of today’s technology to grow your site. Take a look…

**Automate Your Mailing List**

Most people are familiar with the idea of using autoresponder to build relationships and deliver content to members. Indeed, you can even run an entire fixed-term membership site with little more than a website, payment processor and an autoresponder.

However, did you know what many of the big autoresponders have built-in automation tools that make life even easier? For example, some of the big platforms like Aweber.com, MailChimp.com, GetResponse.com, Kayako.com and many more let you use automation workflow and rules to perform tasks such as:

* Automatically subscribing or unsubscribing someone for your list if a specific action happens. For example, if someone on your prospect list becomes a member, you can automatically unsubscribe them from the prospect list and subscribe them to the member/customer list.
* Sending an email after a specific trigger. For example, if someone doesn’t open your live broadcast email after 24 hours, you can send them a follow up email.

Check with your autoresponder to see what sorts of automation workflow tools they have in place to help you manage your lists.

Next…

**Automate Membership Management**

Some membership site owners run their sites somewhat manually, such as by adding and deleting members manually from the membership site as a whole, the mailing list, or even the members only forum. However, you can do these tasks automatically if you use a good membership site script.

A good membership site script will:

* Have members register as soon as they complete payment.
* Revoke access to the site if a member cancels.
* Handle upgrades and downgrades seamlessly so that the new membership level goes into effect the moment the member completes the upgrade or downgrade process.
* Adds or removes members to a mailing list.
* Adds or removes members from a forum.

And so on. Check the platforms checklist for more information about popular membership website software and which ones include these features.

Here’s another way to automate your site…

**Drip Content To Members**

If you have the type of membership site where you’re creating and adding new content on a regular basis, such as monthly or even weekly, then you may feel chained to your site at times. The good news is you can create and upload your content all at once, and use automation tools to drip it out over time on a pre-determined schedule.

Most membership site scripts have a “drip” content built in. If you’re using a site like WordPress to run your site, then there is a built-in feature to schedule content.

**Create Content Easily**

Whether you’re creating content for your members or creating promotional content, there are several tools that can help automate these tasks. For example:

* HaikuDeck.com helps you create slide-presentations quickly and easily, which you can then use to create slide-presentation videos.
* Canva.com makes it easy to create professional graphics.
* Audacity (from audacity.sourceforge.net/download/*)* is a good tool for editing audio content.
* Infogr.am is a good tool for making infographics.

**Automate Marketing**

There are several tools available to help you automate many of your marketing tasks. For example:

* Social media posting tools. HootSuite.com (and similar tools) make social media marketing easier by letting you post across multiple platforms automatically, schedule content, and keep track of how well your content is performing.
* Website optimization. You can keep track of where your visitors are clicking and what works on your site using a tool like HotJar.com.
* Landing pages. You can create landing pages using special software such as LeadPages.net or LandingPageMonkey.com. Alternatively, you can create your site using a content management system like WordPress.org. All of these tools let you create beautiful web pages without knowing anything about coding.
* Testing tools. These tools track and test your split test your marketing campaigns. Some of these tools are built right into other platforms, such as your autoresponder. In other cases, you can use a standalone tool such as SplitTestMonkey.com to test results.
* Contest tools. You can help make a contest go viral by using Rafflecopter.com, which gives visitors extra entries for sharing your content on social media.
* Keyword tools. You can find out what people are searching for in the search engines – and find out how competitive those words are – by using a tool like WordTracker.com or MarketSamurai.com. You can then use an optimization tool such as <https://www.internetmarketingninjas.com/seo-tools/free-optimization/> to help with SEO.

**In Sum…**

As you’ve just see, you can automate many of the regular tasks of running your membership site. With the right tools you can create content, deliver content, market your site, and manage your members much faster and easier than if you did it manually. So put these tools to work for you today to save yourself a whole lot of time and money!

**18. The 30-Minutes-Per-Week Membership Site Checklist**

Sure, a membership site is profitable. But it can also feel like a full-time job, especially if you’re trying to do everything yourself.

The good news is that you don’t have to do everything yourself. Instead, you can work as few as 30 minutes per week by outsourcing. This checklist shows you how…

**Determine Your Needs**

Your first step is to figure out what you want to outsource. Keep in mind that you can outsource all or part of what’s needed to start, run and grow your membership site, including:

* Membership site content creation, including ebooks, reports, checklists, videos, audios, apps and more.
* Email creation, such as weekly emails to members.
* Promotional material creation, including autoresponder emails to prospects, sales letters, Facebook ads and more.
* Affiliate program management. This may include everything from recruiting new affiliates to training and motivating them to running affiliate contests.
* Site design and development, which includes setting up scripts and ensuring database and server security.
* Graphical design, for promo materials as well as site graphics.
* Customer service help, which can include fielding inquiries by email or through a help desk, via live chat or by phone.
* Forum or group interaction, meaning you hire someone to help encourage interaction and answer questions in your members only community.

Now once you define your needs, then you need to determine which tasks you should actually outsource. Ask yourself these questions:

* How much time do you want to work per week?
* How long will it take you to outsource these tasks if you do NOT hire anyone?
* Which of these tasks are you incapable of doing, either through lack of knowledge or skills?
* Which of these tasks do you really enjoy and/or you’re an expert, and it’s something you want to continue doing?
* Which of these tasks would a freelancer produce a better end result than you?
* Is it cheaper to outsource or do it yourself? For this, you’ll need to determine how much your time is worth per hour, how long it would take you to do a task, and how much a freelancer charges. For example, if your time is worth $100 and a task would take two hours (that’s $200 for your time), yet a freelancer can do it for $150, then it’s cheaper to outsource.

Answer these questions honestly and you’ll know exactly what to outsource. Then move onto the next step…

**Invest Time Upfront Building Your Team**

In order to build a freelancing team that you can really trust, you need to invest time upfront doing these tasks:

* Searching for freelancers in a variety of places. The bigger your initial list of potential freelancers, the better chance you have of finding the right freelancer to meet your needs and your budget.
* Doing your due diligence. Be sure to always search Google, get references, check feedback ratings and review each potential freelancer’s portfolio to determine if they are reliable, professional, and provide good work.
* Giving the best candidates small jobs to test how well the two of you work together. Sometimes people look good on paper and come with stellar reputations, but the two of you don’t communicate well. Doing small jobs initially will help you uncover these potential problems early on, rather than in the middle of your most important jobs.
* Training freelancers on how your business operates. NOTE: This doesn’t mean you tell someone how to do their job. Rather, you let them know how your business operates, so they can work independently within that structure.

For example, you’d explain your branding and unique selling proposition to all content producers so that they can integrate your USP into sales letters and other content as needed.

Yes, all of this takes time upfront, but it has the potential to save you a lot of time and money over the long run. So take care with this step. And once you build your team, you can move onto the next step…

**Put Your Team to Work**

Now you need to put your freelancer (or team) to work. Here are tips for managing your team in as little as 30 minutes per week…

* Prepare detailed briefs. The more detail and examples you can provide about what you want, the more likely it is your freelancers will produce the sort of work you’re envisioning.
* Use project brief templates. Save yourself time by saving all your project briefs and creating templates for them, which you can then reuse for similar projects.
* Create training materials. Again, this is something that takes time upfront, but it saves a lot of time over the long run. For example, you can create a training guide for customer service staff, which cuts down on the personal training you’ll need to do.
* Encourage questions. Never make freelancers feel like it’s a “burden” for you to answer questions, otherwise they won’t… and you’ll get poor results and work in the long run.
* Require updates. Let your freelancers know how often you expect them to update you. (E.G., Daily? Weekly?)
* Give your freelancers access to each other. For example, your copywriter should have access to your web designer so that they can work together to create your sales letter page. This saves time so that you don’t have to be the go-between for routine tasks.
* Plan ahead. If you need content two months from now, then make sure your freelancers have it done in one month. This gives you a cushion in case a freelancer misses a deadline.

And one last time saver: consider hiring a project manager. Then you only need to talk to this person for a few minutes each week, because they’ll be in charge of answering questions and managing your team of freelancers.

**Conclusion**

Just because you’re running a membership site doesn’t mean you need to be chained to your desk. You can cut down your actual work time to as little as 30 minutes per week if you outsource using the checklist above! While you’ll need to invest time upfront, once your team is in place you can kick back and relax while your team does all the work!

**19. The Membership Platforms Checklist**

Your membership platform software can make running your membership site an absolute breeze – or it can make it a total nightmare. That’s why you’ll want to pick your platform carefully using this checklist.

Take a look…

**Defining Your Needs**

Your first step is to determine what you really want and need when it comes to membership site software. Obviously, you need a platform that has all the basics, such as automated member management and the ability to protect and secure content.

But what else do you need? Check out these questions to help you decide…

*Do you plan on having multiple membership levels?* It’s a good idea to choose a platform that allows multiple levels, which allows you some flexibility. Because even if you’re planning a single-level model today, you may change your mind later. Be sure to also check if your platform allows for a free subscription level.

*Which payment processor are you going to use?* Some platforms only integrate with processors such as PayPal, while others integrate with dozens of payment processors. Ideally, choose a platform that integrates with multiple payment processors, as that gives you flexibility if you should ever lose access to a specific processor.

*Which autoresponder are you using?* Again, choose a platform that integrates with multiple autoresponders.

*Do you want a built-in affiliate program?* Some platforms integrate with payment processors (such as ClickBank) that have built-in affiliate programs. Some platforms also include affiliate tracking so you can run your own affiliate program.

*Will you be offering coupons (either yourself or for affiliates)?* Coupons are a good way to encourage affiliates to promote, plus it stirs up excitement among prospects. That’s why you’ll want to check if your chosen platform gives you the ability to hand out discount coupons.

*Do you need a built-in discussion group?* Some platforms include members-only forums. This makes it easier than setting up a separate forum, because you don’t need to manually remove members who cancel (as the software will do it for you).

*Is your site built on WordPress?* If so, you may want to consider creating your membership site using a WordPress plugin, some of which are listed below. Keep in mind, however, that a major WordPress update may “break” your plugin.

*What language do your members speak?* If you’re offering something other than English, then be sure your platform supports that language.

*Do you have the technical expertise to install and customize a platform?* If not, check if your chosen platform allows free installations. If free installations aren’t included, then you’ll need to budget for a freelancer to install and customize the site for you.

*Does your chosen platform protect allow for drip-fed content?* If you don’t want to be chained to your desk, then choose a platform that lets you schedule and drip content over time.

*Does your chosen platform have the membership management features you need?* Take a moment and list all the other membership site features you’d like to see in your platform.

*TIP: Go to the respective sites and read the features lists on all the platforms mentioned below, as this will give you some additional ideas about what features you want and need to run your business.*

*What is your budget?* Check that your platform fits your budget. Keep in mind that some platforms charge a base price for the basic platform, but then you need to pay extra for certain features. So be sure to add in all costs (including installation) when determining price.

**20. The Membership Site Hacks Checklist**

If you’ve put the other checklists in this package to work for you, then your membership site is going to get off to a good (or even roaring) start. Now it’s time to take your membership site to the next level by using the same tips, tricks and hacks used by the top membership marketers. This checklist shows you how…

**Offer Free Subscriptions**

Providing free memberships has plenty of benefits, including:

* Giving people a sample of the type of content you have inside. Once people see your high-quality information, they’re sure to upgrade to a paid membership.
* Getting more members into your site. This has the dual benefit of providing you more backend opportunities, plus you’ll have more people interacting on your members only forum or group.

There are multiple ways to offer free memberships. Pick the one that suits your business model the best”

1. Offer free memberships. If you have multiple membership levels, then you might set your lowest level as free.
2. Offer free trials. Here you offer people a free peek inside your site for a limited time, such as one week or even one month.
3. Give free memberships to select people. This is where you manually hand out free memberships. You might stock your membership site with respected people in the niche, you might run contests to give away free memberships, or you might even hand out free memberships to deserving people who seemingly can’ afford your fees.

Next…

**Run Group Challenges**

One great way to get members engaged—which improves member retention—is to run group challenges and events.

For example:

* Challenge dieters to cut out soda this week.
* Challenge members of a writing site take part in “speed writing” activities.
* Encourage members of a career membership site to send out three new resumes this week.

In all cases, be sure members publicly state that they’re doing the challenge, and then they report back on their results as a way to motivate other members.

Next…

**Provide Insider Access**

People can get information just about anywhere, including the type of information you’re offering. But what they can’t get anywhere else on the planet is access to YOU and your expertise. That’s why you’ll want to offer some sort of personal access, where members get a chance to ask you questions and regularly interact with you.

For example:

* Set up a members-only group or forum, and answer questions at least once per week.
* Do live webinars where you field questions.
* Ask members to send you their questions, which you then answer in an upcoming member email.

Next hack…

**Track What Works**

You can follow the best advice in the world for setting up your membership site, but that doesn’t mean the strategy is going to work for your particular audience. What’s more, something that’s working right now might not work six months from now. And that’s why you need to track what works, and then adapt to the changes.

Now typically when we talk about tracking results, we’re referring to things like sales letters and marketing campaigns. Yes, you should definitely track those activities to improve conversions. But you also want to be keeping track of what’s actually working inside your site to engage members and improve retention rates.

For example, you might ask the following types of questions (and then get answers by doing some tracking):

* Are your weekly webinars well-attended? If not, should you turn them into monthly or bi-monthly events instead?
* Is your content delivery method working? For example, are people getting your emails… or would you get a better response if you delivered content through other channels as well?
* Are people participating in your contests? If not, how can you create more engagement?
* Are members buying your backend products? How can you boost responses and backend revenue?

*HINT: In answer to that last question, you can test out different products, sales pages and price points.*

Which brings us to the next point…

**Set Up A Sales Funnel**

In most cases, the majority of your income is going to come in through the backend of your site. That’s why you want to set up a sales funnel at the same time you’re setting up your membership site. In other words, plan your entire sales funnel so that your membership site is a perfect fit within this funnel.

*TIP: Many membership site owners set up the membership site as the frontend offer, and then sell related products and services on the backend. Keep in mind that your membership site can fit ANYWHERE within your sales funnel.*

*For example, you may have a free lead magnet entry point, followed by an inexpensive trip wire, followed by a core offer… and THEN your membership site might be a backend offer to the core offer.*

*Point is, insert your membership site in the place it fits the best into your sales funnel (which isn’t necessarily near the entry point).*

And finally…

**Create Evergreen Content**

Whenever you create content for your membership site, try to create evergreen content. That means the content is relevant and works today, it will work next week, and it will still be relevant and useful a year from now. That way you don’t need to constantly update your content, which saves you a lot of time over the long run.

For example, let’s suppose you’re running a weight loss site. You can create evergreen content by offering time-tested advice on cutting calories, doing cardio and lifting weights. Stay away from mentioning things that may go out of vogue, such as fad diets and new supplements.

**Conclusion: One Final Tip**

Here’s one last piece of advice: take daily steps to grow your membership site.

You see, you don’t need to take huge steps or do earth-shattering things to create a successful membership site. Instead, taking small steps on a consistent basis is what yields big rewards. So make it a point to do something each and every day to grow your site, from creating content to finding marketing partners to engaging your members… and watch your site grow before your eyes!