

Create a Membership Site

Create a Subscription based Website for Passive Income

– Cheat Sheet

Introduction – Membership Site Models

- ✓ Membership sites are one of the most popular online business models for small businesses and entrepreneurs
 - ✓ Can provide recurring, passive income
 - ✓ Users pay to receive access to exclusive content
 - ✓ Payments can be one-time only or recurring
 - ✓ Can be fixed-term or ongoing

 - ✓ The model is popular because:
 - It's suitable for nearly any niche
 - It can provide you with passive income
 - You can reach a new audience or build authority
 - Monthly subscription payments are popular
 - Promote or nurture leads and convert members to buyers

 - ✓ Challenges with a membership site include:
 - It takes time to set up
 - You need to consistently provide high-quality content
 - You need to commit to maintaining it
 - It can be difficult to get customers to accept a paid membership model
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Different Membership Site Models

- ✓ There are different models to choose from
- ✓ They share features but differ in fundamental ways
- ✓ **Drip-Feed Model**
 - Subscribers pay a recurring monthly fee
 - New content is automatically delivered until payments stop
- ✓ **Buffet, or All-in Membership**
 - Subscribers get access to all of the content at any time
 - New content may be regularly added
 - This model can use a one-time or recurring payment
- ✓ **Fixed Term**
 - Give subscribers access for a fixed period
 - It can take monthly payments for that period, or one up-front payment
- ✓ **Hybrid**
 - Opt for a combination of above models
 - Suit the needs of your members, or your goal

Learning Objectives:

- ✓ Identify your market's needs, so you can choose a solution-focused topic
 - ✓ Evaluate models available and select the right one
 - ✓ Craft a UVP that makes your membership stand out
 - ✓ Pick a name for your new site
 - ✓ Identify and create the types of content you need
 - ✓ Plan the content you'll deliver
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- ✓ Decide on a pricing structure
- ✓ Choose a platform to set up a user-friendly site
- ✓ Plan how to attract and convert members
- ✓ Create a membership site sales page
- ✓ Create a member onboarding plan
- ✓ Identify tactics for retaining and enticing back members

Action Steps:

1. Write down the benefits for you and your business in creating a membership site.
2. Write down any cons for yourself and your business in creating a membership site
3. If you belong to any membership sites, which type of sites are they? How do they deliver value to you?

Choose Your Profitable Membership Site Niche/Topic

- ✓ Inventory interests and knowledge and research your market
- ✓ Find a solution-based topic your audience will pay for
- ✓ Choose a membership site type, a UVP and a name

Choosing Your Site's Topics

- ✓ Start by brainstorming possible topic ideas
 - ✓ Consider:
 - What are you interested in?
 - What topics are you an expert in?
 - What kind of problems do you know how to solve?
 - For what topics do you already have an existing bank of content you could repurpose?
 - ✓ The first step is to define your target audience
 - ✓ Create a target member profile that includes demographics and behavioral information
 - ✓ For an existing business, your ideal target member is your current target customers
 - ✓ Use this profile as the persona of a single individual
 - ✓ Research topics your target members are already buying
 - ✓ Look at best sellers on [ClickBank](#), books on [Amazon](#), and other marketplaces
 - ✓ Survey your current customers to see what solutions they're looking for related to your topics
 - ✓ Conduct keyword research to see what your target market is searching for online
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- ✓ See what questions regularly come up in social media, or in communities
- ✓ Research your competitors
- ✓ How much competition is there and what are they selling?
- ✓ Use competition for ideas, but also look for ways to differentiate yourself
- ✓ Create a shortlist of two or three ideas
- ✓ Make them as specific as possible
- ✓ Keep notes of related ideas that could be used for content
- ✓ Look over your list and judge ideas according to:
 - Which problems have the strongest need for solutions according to research?
 - Choose a topic that solves a specific problem
 - Choose a topic area where you have the most expertise or knowledge

Choosing a Membership Model

- ✓ Review the different types of membership sites out there
- ✓ Certain models work better for certain topics or audiences

Fixed-Term Membership Sites

- ✓ Best for topics with a limited amount of information
- ✓ Get people to commit to completing the content in a set period of time

Buffet-Style Membership Sites

- ✓ Best for topics in which the subscribers want to access all information at once
- ✓ An ideal model when there's no set course to follow
- ✓ Good for topics where subscribers have different levels of expertise

or knowledge

Drip-Feed Membership Sites

- ✓ Best for timely information, such as latest news
- ✓ Works well for content to be completed in a specific order, step-by-step

Hybrid Membership Sites

- ✓ Best for topics where there are multiple types of content that people need
- ✓ Might be a topic for which you set up an online course, with resources and information

Other Membership Site Models

- ✓ Some other membership site models to consider include:
 - Online Community
 - The subscriber gets access to communicate with other subscribers
 - Product or Service
 - A membership site that exists to deliver a product or service
 - Offers resources, tutorials, follow-up and customer service assistance
 - ✓ To determine which model best suits your market, ask yourself:
 - Will your members need a forum for ongoing support?
 - Will you be teaching something with a logical progression that could be delivered over a short period?
 - Will you be offering timely information such as news roundups?
 - Are content and resources the stars of your site?
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- Will you be including multiple types of content and delivery

Crafting Your Unique Value Proposition

- ✓ Create a UVP to ensure your membership site stands out among your competitors
- ✓ A statement that explains what the site offers, how it solves customer's needs and what distinguishes it from others
- ✓ When you're clear about the value you offer, it's easier to explain and sell
- ✓ Brainstorm a list of ideas then narrow it down
- ✓ Tips to create your UVP include:
 - What are your qualifications?
 - What do people say about you?
 - Check out the competition
 - Are you the first to offer a membership site?
- ✓ Create one short, concise statement that sums up your unique strengths
- ✓ What is the benefit your market needs the most?
- ✓ What makes you unique in the way you offer it?

Naming Your Membership Site

- ✓ Naming your site is not something to be done lightly
- ✓ Brainstorm and narrow down, considering:
 - What kind of customers are you trying to attract?
 - What's the nature of your topic?
 - Consider SEO
 - Make it memorable
 - Use your company name

- Research the name to check it's unique

Action Steps:

1. Brainstorm ideas for possible topics.
 - a. What topics really interest you?
 - b. What topics are you an expert in?
 - c. What problems do you know how to solve?
 - d. What topics do you have an existing bank of content on?
2. Use the Target Member Profile worksheet to create a description of your ideal member for your site.
3. Choose your research methods, conduct your research, and note your results.
4. Based on your research, create a shortlist of the topics/problems for which your target market has the strongest need for solutions.
5. Choose your solution-focused topic for your membership site. Keep a note of your other shortlisted topics to come back to later.
6. Decide which membership model you will use. Choose the model that best suits your market's needs and your topic.
7. Craft your site's Unique Value Proposition.
8. Brainstorm and pick a name for your new membership site. Keep the title short and add a tag line for more detail.

Gather and Create Your Site Content

- ✓ Decide what kind of content you're going to offer on your site
- ✓ Avoid overwhelm and choose only content types that meets members' needs
- ✓ Stick to the most appropriate formats

Content Formats Include:

- ✓ Step-by-step guides
- ✓ Workbooks and action plans
- ✓ Checklists
- ✓ Templates
- ✓ Swipe files
- ✓ Videos
- ✓ Audio recordings
- ✓ eBooks and Report
- ✓ Mastermind or coaching calls
- ✓ Webinars
- ✓ Newsletters
- ✓ Contests
- ✓ Content archives
- ✓ Community forum
- ✓ Access to influencers

How to Organize Your Content

- ✓ Identify key steps, categories and topics you'll create content for

- ✓ Consider core problems your members join your site to solve
 - How do you best create solutions for problems through content?
 - What point are members at when they join?
 - Where do they want to go from here?
 - What do they want to know?
- ✓ If you have a drip-feed or fixed term membership site, you should have all steps broken down
- ✓ Identify content for each step
- ✓ Include timing for members to move through the steps
- ✓ An all-in buffet site offers an easy to search library of information
- ✓ Break content into subcategories and/or format types
- ✓ Brainstorm type of content that would go into each
- ✓ Help members joining at different levels find where to start
- ✓ Break down content into levels of competence
- ✓ Create beginner to advanced subcategories
- ✓ Identify categories and topics for newsletter or community based sites
- ✓ Consider general as well as sub-category forums

Determining Content Formats

- ✓ Your topic will in some ways determine the formats you'll offer
- ✓ How will members best consume content?
- ✓ Put yourself in your members' shoes

Repurposing Existing Content

- ✓ Look at content you already have to see if there's anything you can use
- ✓ Content could include:

- Blog posts
 - eBooks
 - Reports
 - Videos
 - Coaching Content
 - Podcasts
 - Webinars
 - Email templates
 - Swipe files
 - Checklists
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- ✓ The best membership sites offer exclusive content
 - ✓ Alter or add to your existing content to repurpose it
 - ✓ Gather all of the existing content you can use then figure out what you'll need to create
 - ✓ You don't need to create everything in advance
 - ✓ How much you need to create depends on:
 - Your membership model
 - What content will people need right away, and what will be drip-fed?
 - How much time will you have for content creation once the site is launched?
 - What content is time sensitive?
 - How long content will it take to create?
 - Will you create, delegate or outsource the content?

Action Steps:

Using the guidelines in this module:

1. According to your topic and membership model, outline the structure for your site – key steps, categories/subcategories, and/or topics you will create content for. Use separate paper if needed.
2. Identify and note down the types of content you will create for each step, category/subcategory and topic/subtopic.
3. Identify and note down relevant content you already have.
4. Identify and note down the specific content you need to create before you're ready to open the doors and launch your membership site.
5. Schedule completion dates for each piece of content.

Price and Set Up Your User-Friendly Membership Site

- ✓ Now decide on your pricing
- ✓ It determines whether you'll achieve business goals or not
- ✓ It impacts the perception your customers will have
- ✓ Consider:
 - What are your income goals?
 - The cost of running and maintaining your site
 - Payment structure
 - Your UVP

Market Research

- ✓ Check out how much your competitors are charging
- ✓ See how they've structured their payments
- ✓ Can you match that, or offer more?
- ✓ Look at prices for content from competitors who don't have a membership site
- ✓ Check online marketplaces like [ClickBank](#)

Other Factors to Consider

- ✓ The value of your content
 - ✓ Don't set prices too low – this can give the impression of poor quality
 - ✓ Let higher prices to go for the high-end market
 - ✓ When considering prices, use:
 - The price range you've discovered through market research
 - Your UVP and how it fits
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- Your income goals and how much you'll need
- The price that will bring the highest conversions
- ✓ If you're not sure, choose a median range price
- ✓ You can adjust later according to feedback and performance
- ✓ Attract people by offering special deals such as:
 - Offer 'Early Bird' prices
 - Free content with upsell
 - Different prices for different membership tiers
 - Special deal for current customers

Pick a Platform and Set Up Your Site

- ✓ The next step is to research and select a site platform
- ✓ Decide what your guidelines for evaluation will be. Consider:
 - Technical ability
 - Financial budget
 - Site structure
 - Payment set-up
 - Customer support

Features for Your Site

- ✓ Consider what features you'll need for your site
 - Do you need to take recurring subscriptions?
 - Will you be drip-feeding content?
 - Do you need multiple subscription plans?
 - Will there be a built-in forum/community?
 - Will you include an online store?
 - Will you include an affiliate program?
 - Which autoresponder will you use?
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- Do you need extra features?
- ✓ Consider what features you need in order to make your site user-friendly
- ✓ Include things like:
 - A straight-forward sign-in process
 - A simple user interface
 - Clear structure/navigation
 - Automated password recovery
 - Easy renewal or cancellation

Popular Membership Programs

WordPress Plugins

- ✓ [MemberPress](#)
 - Easy to set up and use, so ideal for beginners
 - All ordinary features
 - Offers membership levels and access rules for strict control
 - ✓ [WishList Member.](#)
 - One of the first WordPress membership site plugins
 - Allow a member to have multiple membership levels
 - Allow for manual registration
 - ✓ [Paid Memberships Pro](#)
 - Slightly more advanced for people with backend experience
 - Offers more robust features
 - Easy add-on features
 - ✓ [Member Mouse](#)
 - A good option if you intend to sell through your site
 - Allows direct payments
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Other Platforms

- ✓ [Amember](#)
 - Can be integrated with your existing site
 - Geared towards eCommerce with shopping features
 - Versatile, and with good customer support
- ✓ [Memberful](#)
 - Very easy to use with setup wizard
 - A dashboard with an overview of membership plans
 - All the robust features of other programs

Setting Up Your Membership Site

- ✓ Each platform has tutorials to help get you set up
 - ✓ Follow instructions and make decisions along the way
 - ✓ Choose membership levels
 - ✓ Stick to simple and obvious levels so members understand easily what they'll get
 - ✓ Use clear and common phrases
 - ✓ Decide on navigation and include pages like:
 - Welcome page
 - Start here
 - FAQ
 - Customer support page
 - ✓ Think of the structure as a web of linked pages
 - ✓ Create an easy path through
 - ✓ Add your relevant and high quality content and set access rules
 - ✓ Consider branding elements you'll need:
 - Logo
 - Color scheme
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- Fonts
 - Images
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- ✓ All elements should be in keeping with your brand
 - ✓ Convey the same impression as the rest of your content

Action Steps:

1. Consider the various influencing factors outlined in this module, and decide on your pricing structure for your membership site using the pricing structure worksheet.
2. Define what you need from a membership platform. Note those requirements down and prioritize them.
3. Research a selection of popular membership platforms, and choose a platform for your site. Choose the one that is most user-friendly, and fits as many of your needs as possible.
4. Sign up for your chosen membership site platform (preferably a free trial), watch the tutorials, and set up the key pages and branding for your site.

Attract and Sign Up New Members for Your Site

- ✓ It's unlikely people will just stumble across your membership site
 - ✓ Proactively attract the right people with proven methods
 - ✓ **Email your list**
 - Contact your list and emphasize site benefits
 - Offer special deals to entice sign-ups
 - Test your site with current customers
 - ✓ **Create an affiliate program**
 - Ask affiliates to promote your site
 - Approach people with a similar audience
 - Use a platform with affiliate program built in
 - ✓ **Create a referral program**
 - Encourage existing members to tell others
 - Offer rewards
 - Create simple content for members to use as promotion
 - ✓ **Joint promotions**
 - Create promotional campaigns with others in your niche
 - Promote them in exchange for their promotion of your site
 - Take advantage of a ready-made audience
 - ✓ **Advertising**
 - Use platforms like [Google AdWords](#) or [Facebook Ads](#),
 - Get a good idea of where your target audience is
 - Create content that speaks to them
 - ✓ **Social media**
 - Announce your website launch and emphasize benefits
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- Offer discounts or special deals to social media followers
- Strengthen relationships, increase engagement and customer satisfaction
- ✓ **Host a free webinar**
 - Tell people about your site through a webinar
 - Offer related information
 - Help people solve a problem
- ✓ **Blog**
 - Write about your site on your blog
 - Offer a taste of the content readers can expect
 - Write regular relevant posts to promote your site
- ✓ **Guest blog**
 - Offer free content to a related blog in your niche
 - Include a pitch and link for readers to sign up
 - Invite others to guest write for your blog
- ✓ **Create a lead magnet**
 - Create a free report that offers a taste of your site's value
 - Pitch your site and offer a sign-up link
 - Solve a problem to leave a lasting impression

Creating Your Sales Page

- ✓ You should have a dedicated sales page for your membership site
 - ✓ There are many different tools you can use, or an in-built page
 - ✓ Elements of an effective sales page include:
 - The name of your site and catchy subheading
 - A rundown of benefits
 - Specifics of what people will find
 - Social proof
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- Who you are and why people should listen
- FAQs
- What people need to know
- ✓ Programs for creating sales pages include:
 - [LeadPages](#)
 - [OptimizePress](#)
 - [InstaPage](#)
 - [Lander](#)
- ✓ Pick based on your technical skill and ease of use
- ✓ You can also use whatever is provided by your membership platform

Action Steps:

1. Using the list of ideas in this module, plan how you will attract and convert members for your new site. Make a list of the main tasks you need to do, including any areas you want to learn more about implementing.
2. Outline the copy for your sales page and pick a tool for creating your page. Integrate your payment platform so that you're ready to sign up members. Follow tutorials for your chosen platform to help you set it up.

Run Your High-Retention Membership Site

- ✓ Create a good first impression through member onboarding
 - ✓ Make sure members know how to use and get the most out of your site
 - ✓ A major challenge for memberships sites is that members join, don't spend long on the site, then cancel
 - ✓ They haven't enjoyed the benefits they were promised
 - ✓ They may also disengage because of technical issues
 - ✓ With a good onboarding process the new member is quickly and easily engaged
 - ✓ It gets them using the site right away
 - ✓ Techniques for successful onboarding include:
 - **Video welcome email**
 - Put a human face on the experience
 - Walk them through the site
 - **Email series**
 - Send out a series introducing key features or highlighting best content
 - Let them know what to expect in the future
 - **New Member Guide**
 - Create a new member guide to help people get started
 - Show them where they can find everything they might need
 - **Provide a Content Path**
 - Create a path with content leading members from piece to piece
 - Create different paths for different categories
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How to Choose Your Onboarding Method

- ✓ A welcome email and quick guide to using the site might be just enough
- ✓ You just need to point them in the right direction to get started
- ✓ If you have a lot of content the process will be more involved
- ✓ Put yourself in the shoes of the new member
- ✓ Assume it's not obvious
- ✓ Have someone else use the site and give you feedback

How to Retain New Members

- ✓ Your onboarding process is the first step in encouraging retention
 - ✓ It's easier to keep existing members than to find new ones
 - ✓ Techniques for retention include:
 - Sending regular emails reminding members of site features and benefits
 - Sending emails to inform members of new content you've added
 - Encourage members to log in to see a key piece of content
 - Build excitement about what's coming
 - Consider an on-site forum or Facebook group for communicating with members
 - Offer high-value bonuses for long-standing members
 - Make sure you always provide excellent customer service
 - ✓ You should also identify tactics for bringing back members who have drifted away
 - ✓ Offer a free month of membership
 - ✓ Offer a down-sell to a cheaper tier
 - ✓ Send out short automated messages to people who have left
 - ✓ Offer a discount coupon to sign up again
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- ✓ Survey leaving members to find out why they left

Action Steps:

Create Your Member Onboarding Plan

1. Document everything you think new members to your membership site will need to know.
2. Decide on the best way to show them what they need to know to get started. For example, a Getting Started Guide, a Content Path, or an orientation video.
3. Using the methods suggested in this module, identify and document the tactics you will use for retaining members.
4. Using the methods suggested in this module, identify and document the tactics you will use to win your customers back when they cancel.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- ✓ Once it's launched, you'll need to maintain your site
- ✓ Track what's working and what isn't
- ✓ Constantly strive to improve the user experience
- ✓ Keep your focus on delivering value
- ✓ Deliver on the promises you made in your marketing
- ✓ Always look for ways to exceed member's expectations
- ✓ Spend time on creating regular content if your model requires it
- ✓ Set aside time to work and produce what you'll need for the next few weeks
- ✓ You can always outsource content creation if it's too much to handle

You've learned:

- ✓ How to identify market needs to produce the site they need
 - ✓ How to choose the right membership site type
 - ✓ Your UVP
 - ✓ What types of content you need to create
 - ✓ What content you'll deliver
 - ✓ How to set your pricing structure
 - ✓ Which platform is the right one for you
 - ✓ How to create a membership site sales page
 - ✓ How to create a good onboarding process
 - ✓ Tactics for retaining members
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- ✓ You're ready to review your notes and get started building your successful membership site

Action Steps:

1. Review your notes and what you have learned so far.
2. Identify the next steps that you will take to finish getting your membership site ready. Assign deadlines for each.