



Membership Site Planning Checklist

What Type of Membership?

Before you get started, you need to figure out what type of membership/subscription site you want to start. **Hint** – *your membership site might incorporate more than one of these following ideas.*

- **Online Membership Sites:** The most common type of content-based membership is an online membership where members have access to certain content, advice, tools, etc.
 - You can offer a monthly course, digital newsletter, articles, how to information
 - ...whatever your members want. You can include downloadable software, offer coaching, provide templates or other tools. What your membership site does is completely up to you.
- **Physical Product Subscription:** Nobody says you have to do everything online and there's something about having something a real physical product in one's hands. It might be content delivered via print newsletter, magazine, CD or DVD. Or it might be a t-shirt of the month, wine of the month, craft project of the month or anything else your members would be interested in.

You could also do a combination of the above. Give some content online but provide your members with a print newsletter to look forward to each month. Or if you're offering a wine of the month club, have your members log in to find recipes, wine pairings and other useful content.

Will You Include Interaction?

Adding an element of interaction to your membership site can help increase the value of your membership, but it often increases your workload too. Weigh your options and preferences to decide if you want to add interaction.

Some Options:

- **Members Forum:** Allow your member to communicate with one another through a message board or forum. The challenge with this method is getting the discussion going and maintaining it. To do that, you'll need a large number of members (or VERY passionate ones who like to talk), possibly recruit others to get involved and you will also likely have to start/participate in discussions.
- **Facebook or Other Group through a 3rd Party Services:** Instead of messing with your own tech set up, you can utilize popular platforms like Facebook to create interactivity.
- **Blog:** If a member's forum seems like too much work, including a blog is one way to allow some interaction. You post member content to a blog and if members want, they can post a comment, ask a question, etc. It is also a much more controlled way of the discussion of your members as the topics are laid out for them.
- **Webinar / Google+ Hangouts:** You can hold periodic group sessions via webinar or Google+ Hangouts. Everyone can listen in and have the opportunity to ask questions and interact.

Membership Site Organization

Before you start writing, recording audio or taking any video recordings, decide on the specific topics your membership site is going to cover and how you are going to organize the information.

What to Think about When Deciding on Specific Content:

- Look at what information is included in other similar membership sites. What ideas can you adopt and what can you make it better?
- Think about your target market and what their biggest struggles are. How can your product address that? How can you help them do it in less time and without as much work as usual.
- Survey your readers and customers on what they would find helpful. Always keep tabs on what your members want and evolve your membership according to their changing needs.

Organizing Your Membership Content:

- **Intervals and Payment.** Determine how often will you add new content/product to the membership site. A general guideline is to add something new at least as often as your members pay. For example, if they pay weekly, something should be added to their membership, at minimum, on a weekly basis.
- **Media.** Decide what type of media you will use to deliver your content. You may even choose to use more than one for each lesson. For example, you might include a recording and a written guide, so students can choose their preference. Or you might conduct a live webinar and offer transcripts and recordings for those who can't attend live.

Media Options:

You have plenty of options when it comes to the types of media you can use in your membership site. Having a variety of media formats has a number of benefits including:

- **Increase perceived value of your product.** Instead of just getting a PDF document, your reader gets a variety of information in different formats, so they naturally feel it's more valuable.
- **The ability to cater to people's different learning preferences and disabilities.** While some people may like reading, if you can provide the same information via audio recording, you can capture those customers who want to take your information product and listen in their car, while working out, etc.
- **Some subjects are easier to teach in writing.** While others are easier to teach with videos or screenshots, for example. You can choose the appropriate media for each part of your product OR you can offer each part in a variety of media formats. You've got plenty of flexibility.

Some Options:

- Online content (HTML)
- PDF documents with text
- PDF documents with screenshots/photographs
- Live Webinar
- Live action videos
- Screen capture videos
- Slide presentation videos
- Audios
- Transcripts
- Software
- Spreadsheets

- Patterns
- Email
- Photographs
- Illustrations
- Charts
- Tables
- Flowcharts
- Mind Maps
- Checklists
- Templates
- Resource lists
- Journals and planners
- Quizzes
- Glossaries
- Mobile apps

Download Set Up:

To help your readers use your product, plan how you will have your customers access their membership site content.

A Few Options:

- **Single document download:** If your membership site content is just one file, you might give your readers a link to download it.
- **Contents in a zip folder:** If you have multiple files, you might want to put it in a zip folder. If you choose this option, make sure you include an instructions document, so your customer knows how to use the product.
- **A download area:** An advantageous way to deliver your product is to give your readers access to a download area. This can be a page or several pages where you welcome your customer and give them instructions on how to use the product.

This method has the advantage of creating a more personal experience, instructions are very clear and your download area is the perfect place to promote back end products.

- **Interactive area:** If you plan to incorporate interaction into your membership, make that part of your plan. Whether it's a blog where you add the weekly/monthly content or a message board, make it easy for your members to access and find.