

MEMBERSHIP MOGUL

THE EASY WAY TO BUILD A PROFITABLE MEMBERSHIP WEBSITE



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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Why You Need a Membership Site	6
Membership Websites 101	9
Setting Up a Membership Site	12
Finding Members	16
Paid Promotion	16
Affiliates.....	17
Free Promotion.....	18
Facebook Groups.....	18
Pinterest	20
Instagram	20
Retaining Members.....	22
Why People Cancel Their Membership.....	22
Conclusion	27
Resources.....	29

Introduction

You may have noticed a trend toward creating monthly subscriptions in just about every industry you can think of—books, video games, movies, television, music, apps, services, food, clothing—you name it, there’s probably some sort of subscription option associated to it. You can even get razor blade deliveries with an automated, monthly subscription option!

Think about all the different companies that have started monthly recurring membership programs and it’ll quickly become apparent just how profitable they must be, right?

Amazon has its Amazon Prime program, its Kindle Unlimited program, and its Amazon Fresh program. You have streaming content providers like Netflix and Hulu.

There’s music like Pandora, and Spotify, and Apple Music, and Google Music. You have video games that charge monthly fees—everything from MMORPGs like World of Warcraft to tiny little music apps that charge a few bucks a month to access karaoke songs, songs you can play on a virtual piano, etc.

There are also unlimited magazine and book apps where you can pay a monthly fee to gain access to new book releases and digital magazines.

Then, there is the whole monthly “crate” or subscription box model that has taken the Online world by storm. This is where customers receive themed membership boxes every month around things like fitness, beauty, parenting and tech, all charging a monthly subscription fee. There’s one main reason so many major companies are moving toward monthly subscription offers—*they are incredibly profitable!*

An online membership website is one of the most profitable types of membership programs of them all. That’s because you have no inventory or shipping to deal with!

In this guide, we’re going to talk about how you can start your own membership site in just about any niche or genre you can think of. I’ll talk about how to find members and successfully launch your membership program even if you haven’t done it before.

Why You Need a Membership Site

The biggest reason companies are moving to monthly subscriptions is to provide a steady flow of income that does not require additional advertising expenditure to maintain.

Yes, your membership site income may fluctuate from time to time. There will be months where you experience a higher number of cancellations due to several different reasons such as: an economic downturn, or an update you made that didn't strike a chord with members.

But, you will have months where you generate a stream of new members as well which will immediately increase your overall monthly income. So, don't worry. It'll all balance out if you are actively engaging members and always looking for ways to reach new subscribers and tap into your market.

Ultimately, membership sites are a pretty stable source of income, but there are other advantages, as well.

If you've ever sold physical products, then you understand how expensive it can be to get started. Acquiring physical products is prohibitively expensive in the beginning, and if it doesn't sell, you're stuck with all the inventory.

With membership sites, it's possible to create all of the content entirely yourself. Or, you can outsource it to qualified freelancers at affordable rates and free up your time.

Or, depending on your niche, you can even buy premade content that you can use to power up your membership program. Just be sure to check out the licenses that come with the private label content to ensure that it's allowed to be used in membership sites.

Membership sites can also be a great way to stay in touch with your customer base, as well as to build authority in your market. You can also have a forum or private Facebook group for members only and build your own social network that encourages members to share content and resources.

Best of all, these people are paying customers, so you can sell additional products to them both inside the members' area and through email campaigns.

It's a great way to introduce people to other products, or network with others by joining their affiliate programs and maximize your income easily.

Once they join as a member and see the quality you deliver, they will trust you enough to buy higher ticket products later.

Membership Websites 101

Before we get into the actual development of a site, let's talk about some of the most basic aspects of membership sites, just in case you're not entirely familiar with how they work.

A membership site is typically based in a popular and evergreen niche, such as internet marketing, weight loss, crafts, investing, self-improvement or fitness. Each month, new content is added which customers can access as long as they continue to pay their membership fees.

There are several ways to deliver content to members:

1. You can give immediate access to this month's content only.
2. You can give immediate access to this month's content, and drip feed bonus content each month over time. That's a way of rewarding those who remain as members of your site.

3. You can give access to content starting with the first month and going forward, which is appropriate for sites that are educational in nature and require sequential content.
4. You can give immediate access to all content at once, plus any additional content as it is added.

There's no right or wrong way to deliver content. How you choose to deliver your content will be based on your particular needs. Too much content can be overwhelming for people.

Generally speaking, if your site is educational, it will probably need to drip feed starting from the first month. Otherwise, you can give access to all content at once. To keep members longer, some site owners only give access to a certain amount of content each month. This is basically called "drip feeding."

Some membership site owners choose to not give members access to past content. This is done to keep people from waiting a few months and joining to get several months' worth of content for the price of just one month. It makes it fairer for current members who may have paid for several months.

This is mostly done when the content is limited in some way, such as PLR membership sites. The content would be devalued if too many people got access to everything for the price of a single month.

It's important to keep your membership updated every month to keep members paying. Many people are too busy to worry about canceling a membership if it's not too expensive, but you don't want to give them a reason to make the decision to cancel.

You might also choose to update slowly throughout the month to make sure people who sign up for a trial membership (if you offer one) don't get a full month of updates during the trial and then cancel.

I've run several membership sites over the years. I've found that adding video or audio content each month can really help to keep people engaged.

Setting Up a Membership Site

Setting up a simple membership site is a lot easier than you probably think. You just need to build a website, create a method for users to join and pay their monthly fee, and provide a way for members to download their content.

For example, if you use WordPress, you can use a simple plugin called Member Genius. It's one of the simplest plugins on the market.

<https://www.membergenius.com/>

Do you need programming knowledge, or you need to be a spectacular designer? Nope. All you need is a basic sales letter convincing them to join, a page for users to download the content, and a simple script to handle usernames and passwords and protect content.

There's a plethora of scripts out there to help you run your membership site, but one that operates on WordPress is probably the easiest to use. I've used about 10 different systems over the years, so I'm speaking from personal experience.

There are many different plugins available for WordPress that will help you set up a membership site in no time. I've been building websites for years and unless something changes, WordPress is the best option for creating your site.

At one point, most of the membership plugins for WordPress were prohibitively expensive. This prevented a lot of people from setting up a membership site over the years. Times have changed.

Today, there are many different options to choose from in prices to fit every budget and with options to fit pretty much anything you need to do.

If you don't want to use WordPress to host your membership site, an easy to use alternative is **Kyvio**. Kyvio is a membership site and marketing system available at <https://www.kyvio.com>

With **Kyvio**, you can set up protected download pages for individual products or collections and you can easily build a recurring membership website without having to host any off your own content. It's also one of the more affordable options newbie-friendly in the event you haven't created a subscription site before.

Member Factory is a similar product which can be found here:

<https://www.invanto.com/memberfactory/>

Invanto is constantly evolving to include new features. As of the time of this writing they've already added many in-demand options.

They also ensure that your products are securely protected so that only authorized, paying customers can access them.

Having a membership site is pretty much useless if you don't have a way to protect your content from unauthorized access, right? After all, why would people pay for a membership when they can just type in a backdoor URL and access it all for free? You could lose a lot of money by not protecting your content.

I bought both products – **Kyvio** and **Member Factory** over the past year.

Both products have very active Facebook group in which members ask questions, get help, support one another, etc. In other words, you won't find yourself in a position where you questions that go unanswered for days and weeks on end.

Honestly, I burned a small fortune over the years experimenting with a variety of membership plugins and tools. At the end of the day, it really comes down to personal needs and preference. For example, for some people a membership site IS their business.

In that case, you may want to consider some of the more advanced systems on the market. If you're just looking to protect a few products or downloadable material, a simple system may be a better choice.

Finding Members

Getting members into your new membership site can be tricky. Unless you already have an email list in the market, you'll have to start from scratch. Thankfully, launching a membership website isn't all that difficult to do if you've designed a program around a hot, evergreen niche where there is a demand for your type of content.

If you're just getting started, you can use a combination of free and paid promotion methods. Here are a few quick and easy ways to get started:

Paid Promotion

Paid promotion is the easiest way to generate traffic quickly, but it can be costly. For this reason, you might want to skip this method in the beginning, unless you have a some money set aside for it or you have experience investing in paid advertising options.

If you do have the budget, Facebook Ads are perhaps the best way to get traffic to a membership site quickly. You can use their extensive

demographic and lifestyle data to create ultra-targeted ads that will appeal to potential members.

For example, with Facebook advertising you are able to easily connect with people based on income, location, and interests. This makes it easier to find qualified prospects that are likely to be interested in your membership program.

Pinterest Ads can also be a great way to find new members. These ads tend to convert very well, especially if you have something that appeals to a wide range of people, or that falls within one of the most popular topic areas on Pinterest such as a recipe site, how-to guides, homebased businesses, work at home or fitness.

Affiliates

In between paid promotion and free promotion, you'll find affiliates.

Affiliates love promoting membership sites because they like getting that recurring paycheck on a regular basis! Those are the people you want to target. You want to make sure your affiliates know they will be

getting paid recurring commissions instead of just once. This will be what draws them in.

If you find it hard to attract affiliates, you might consider offering them 100% of the first month's membership fees, and something like 50% for each month thereafter. This will attract affiliates who prefer a higher percentage upfront, as well as those who love recurring income.

Sure, you will have some people who only subscribe one month. Obviously, you won't make a profit from those people, but you will probably find that most people do stay longer and you'll make your money over time.

Free Promotion

In some cases, free promotion methods can be even more effective than paid methods. Let's take a look at some of the best free promotion methods for membership sites.

Facebook Groups

A few years ago, creating or commenting on posts within a Facebook page was a great way to get attention and generate traffic to your own Facebook page, which you could use to promote your own products and websites. However, now that Facebook has started showing posts to only a small number of people, pages just aren't as useful as they once were. Plus, there's a trend showing that people don't pay that much attention to comments anymore.

Groups, on the other hand, are still a good way to reach people and connect with your target audience.

Posts within groups reach more people than posts on pages. Better yet, they tend to get more interaction than fan pages.

Additionally, groups can be more carefully cultivated, because users can post there, not just the administrators. They're basically like forums, which encourages deeper connections and ongoing activity.

If you don't have your own group, you can join other people's groups and reach their audiences. Just make sure you read their rules carefully and follow them to the letter.

Depending on your niche, you may even find Facebook groups that are specifically meant for advertising to members. If they have no rules posted, be sure to contact the group's owner before you post and ask for permission to advertise your site.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a great option for attracting traffic, especially if you're in a niche that is popular or trending on the site. Niches such as weight loss, recipes, beauty, fitness, fashion, art, graphics, crafts, photography, home and garden, and technology are all popular subjects there.

Even if you're not in the most popular areas, pinning content takes very little time, and could mean a significant amount of traffic for very little work.

Instagram

Like Pinterest, Instagram has specific topics that perform better than others, but you can still build a following and get traffic even if you're in an outlier niche.

Be sure to post actual content that is related to your niche and not just random stuff or ads all the time.

For example, if you're in the fitness niche, you could post pictures of your workout or different fitness equipment you're trying out. If you're in the beauty niche, you could post pictures of various cosmetic looks and techniques.

Be sure you add several hash tags to every post. This is the primary way people will find your posts!

Retaining Members

It's not enough to talk about how to generate traffic and build your membership base. It's just as important to discuss ways to **keep those members** for as long as possible.

It's been said the average customer tends to remain a member of a monthly recurring program for about three months. Some cancel during the first month. Others may stay for years. But generally speaking, you can expect most members to stay about 3-6 months.

Of course, there are ways to increase that average number—sometimes quite significantly. We're going to talk about a few of those ways.

Why People Cancel Their Membership

Before we can talk about how to hold onto membership, we should first take a look at why members leave in the first place.

Here are a few of the most common reasons:

- They can no longer afford it.
- They've decided it is no longer meeting their needs.
- They are unhappy with recent updates or changes.
- The price changed.
- They've outgrown the content.
- They found a better price elsewhere.

You'll notice that most of these are within your control, right?

One easy way to ensure that your members are satisfied with your content, as well as how to come up with ideas for future updates is by polling your customer base. Create a survey that is designed to give your members a forum in which to share their thoughts and feedback regarding your membership site. Ask them what they would like to see in future updates. Inquire as to what content they've enjoyed and what they feel could use improving.

The more you make the site about them, such as by giving them a platform in which to share their experiences directly with you, and the more open you are to building content and updates around what matters the most to your customer base, the easier it will be to retain those members for a longer period of time.

Some membership site owners have a survey that appears when a member attempts to cancel their membership to their site. That way, they can find out exactly why they are canceling – giving invaluable insight as to how to improve the site.

For example, if they say they can no longer afford it, you could offer them a free month, or a discount that reduces their monthly costs.

A popular magazine app recently ran a campaign that offered members who attempted to cancel their subscription with a huge discount, lowering the \$10-\$15 monthly plan to just \$5 per month for the next 3 months, before returning to \$15 a month. This type of strategy can help keep members on board longer. Once the discounted period ends, many will stay longer at full price.

You could also offer them added bonuses that entice them to remain a member, or access to a secondary membership site for free. The more value you provide, the easier it will be to boost retention rates and continue to expand your customer base.

Don't let your content go stale. Look for ways to keep your membership content fresh, updated and available in multiple formats. Always keep a close eye on your market so you know what topics are of most interest and what your members are looking for.

Communication is key. Reach out to members regularly through email-based updates. Offer them extra content at no additional cost, bonus material or auxiliary components that enhance existing content and bolster the perceived value of your membership program.

Consider integrating a support desk, forum or live support so that your members can reach you easily. [Kyvio lets you run a support desk](#) with their membership system. Forums can help to keep you connected with your subscribers. They will also help to encourage interaction between members, making your site sticky. Of course, forums do require an additional time commitment from you as do Facebook Groups.

But the fact is, many membership programs are thriving simply because members feel as though they are part of a community and don't want to abandon that by canceling their membership account. I'll include a few resources to help you get set up in the back page of this mini-eBook.

Conclusion

Building a membership site is a great way to generate consistent, recurring income, but it's not something that can be entirely automated. You'll need to update regularly, communicate frequently, and work towards creating really good content that your members are more than happy to pay for.

You can, however, simplify the process of keeping your membership site updated by creating 2-3 months of content in advance. Stockpile new material so that you can easily update without waiting until the last minute only to find yourself overwhelmed every month.

Create a content calendar that outlines future updates. Not only will that help you to stay organized and focused, but it will help you come up with new content ideas.

Be sure to:

1. Update regularly while retaining a high level of quality.

2. Ask members what they want to see in future updates, and communicate regularly.
3. Offer members who are canceling an incentive to remain in the form of discounts, bonuses or additional options.
4. Deliver above and beyond expectations.
5. Work towards outdoing yourself every month. Don't get comfortable with the same old content formats. Give your members additional options and always work towards expanding coverage or providing additional value.

I wish you the very best of success!

Jim

Resources

For your convenience, here are links to some of the resources mentioned throughout this guide:

Kyvio:

>> <https://www.kyvio.com>

Invanto:

>> <https://www.invanto.com/memberfactory/>

Wordpress:

>> [Member Genius \(very easy to use\)](#)

>> [MemberPress](#)

>> [Restricted Content Pro](#)

Support Options:

>> Live Chat/Help: <https://www.chatstack.com/>

>> Live Support: <https://www.livechatinc.com>

>> Forum Software: <https://plushforums.com>

Creating a community within your membership site:

>> <https://buddypress.org/>

>> <https://bbpress.org/>