

STARTING A MEMBERSHIP SITE
To Make Even More Money
IN INTERNET MARKETING



MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP SITES CAN EARN YOU EVEN MORE MONEY IN INTERNET MARKETING

There are many different ways you can make money with your internet business. Most people first starting out either promote affiliate products or they decide to have their own product.

For many, this product is often an e-book. While it is possible to make good money selling e-books, that is only one option. Another option is to start a membership site.

The two aren't necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, a good internet business sells several different products so that they can have income coming in from several different sources. The main point is that a membership site can seriously boost your income.

When people buy an e-book once they make the purchase you probably won't get any more money from that sale. With a membership site (and this will depend on the type of payment schedule you decide on) the customer will pay you more than once.

Are you getting excited yet? Once you're done reading this report, you'll have all the tools you need to be able to start your own membership site.

WHAT IS A MEMBERSHIP SITE EXACTLY?

A membership site is a website where only its members can access the information. Not all sites require money – there are free ones that require a username and a password. A membership site is a website where only its members can access the information. Not all sites require money – there are free ones that require a username and a password.

The one thing they do have in common is that they're exclusive. Not just "anyone" can access the information. You need to be special in some way – either by paying or obtaining the correct login credentials.

Besides having free member sites and those that require payment, they can take on different forms such a blog or a forum. The format you choose will depend on your needs.

WHY EVERY INTERNET MARKETER NEEDS AT LEAST ONE MEMBERSHIP SITE

As discussed above, it is a good idea to start a membership site if you want to increase your profits. Here's a list of the benefits to owning one.

- **Dominate the competition in your niche**
If you have a membership site, you'll stand out amongst the people who have a score of e-books but nothing else to offer their customers.
- **Get more money out of your list**
You may have heard that "the money is in the list". And, you'll want to get as much money from your list members as you can. A membership site is the perfect way to do this.
- **Increase customer loyalty**
If your site has great content and you respond promptly to all queries, a membership site will increase customer loyalty a lot better than selling individual products. This is because the customer will feel as if you're more accessible.
- **Develops a sense of community**
Membership sites that have a forum help encourage a sense of community. So not only do the members interact with you, but they can interact with each other. This is a good selling point and a benefit for the owner of the site because it is another thing that will help increase your customer's loyalty.
- **Great way to build a list**
If you want to start a free membership site, or offer portions of your membership site for no cost, it can present an effective way to build a list.

- **Develop passive income**
Although internet marketing is a great career, the money can be a little unstable. A membership site is a good way to not only make more money, but to make the income you do bring in a lot steadier.
- **They don't need to be complicated**
A lot of people assume that a membership site is complicated. Not necessarily. There are plenty of options that are simple, such as exclusive content delivered via autoresponder.

Let's look at the math. say you have a membership site that offers exclusive content related to your niche. If you charge \$19.95 a month and have 100 subscribers, that translates to nearly \$2000 profit and all you needed to do was refresh the content and make sure the site is running properly.

HOW DO MEMBER SITES WORK?

When a member pays you money, they are then allowed access into the site. But since there are several different formats you can use, the technical aspects of setting up and running a membership site will differ. You can choose to take the easy route and set it up via autoresponder. Or, you can have a site with multiple bells and whistles including forum, blog, videos, and other content.

You'll need to assess your customer base and determine what they'll want. For example, if your in the health and fitness niche and you have a weight loss membership site, your customers may require different tools than if you had a membership site on how to make money blogging.

If you decide to open up a free membership site, all your members will need is the right membership information.

WHAT ABOUT TECHNICAL SKILLS?

You may be wondering about the technical aspect of starting a membership site. How do you do it exactly? Well, there are a lot of different options. Here are some technologies to consider:

- **PHP based membership site**
If you know PHP you understand that you can set the site up to require a username and password. When customers pay you they'll get the login information.
- **Autoresponder based site**
Once the customers pay you they're information will be added to the autoresponder. Their content will be delivered via email.
- **Use a membership creator package**
There are some software packages out there that are designed to help you create a membership site. You may want to ask around to see which are best.

If you don't have the technical skills or the time to handle the technical details you can always outsource.

SHOULD YOU MAKE IT A FREE SITE OR A PAID ONE?

The first thing you need to decide is if you will set up a free membership site or a paid membership site. There are some good points for each.

Benefits of a Free Membership Site

- Can help you build a list
- Entice people into the full membership
- To protect your sensitive content
- Build a sense of community among members

Benefits of a paid membership site

- Make more money internet marketing
- Develop a loyal customer base
- Have a steady stream of passive income
- Build a sense of community among members

Those lists are by no means complete. However, it is a good list to help you decide if you want to take their money or not. Keep in mind that one membership site can have a free and a paid version. The free version can help you build your list and also be used as a teaser to get people into the full membership

CONTENT OPTIONS FOR YOUR SITE

At some point, you'll need to decide on what kind of content you will offer your customers in the membership site. You can basically do whatever you want but your choices need to be a perfect balance of making your customers happy and not making your life too complicated.

TYPES OF CONTENT TO PUT ON YOUR SITE

If you've ever been part of a membership site then you probably have an idea of what to expect. You may want to become a member of a site or two so you can get a feel for how they work. With that said, here's a list of some of the types of content you can have on it.

- Articles
- Blog posts
- Downloads (software, ebooks, special reports, etc)
- Forum posts
- Videos

Bear in mind that the most complicated membership site isn't always the best. If you keep it simple and you're consistent, customers will still be very pleased as long as your content provides value to them.

DECIDING ON THE CONTENT

Before you start creating your membership site, you need to give it some thought as to what kind of content you want to put on it. You can make things simple or incredibly complex. In fact, there are so many choices as to what you put on the site that it can be overwhelming. Use these suggestions to help you decide.

Get to Know Your Customers

Think about the niche market your membership site will cover. Get to know your customers and what they want. If you've already been selling products in your niche, think about what has worked and what hasn't. The more you get to know your future customers, the easier it will be to provide them with content.

What kind of content is standard in your niche?

Another way to approach the content issue is to think about what kind of content is standard in your niche. For example, if a lot of people seem to be selling videos and eBooks, you may want to provide your customers the same thing. Or not. It will all depend on if what you offer will add value to the market and will win customers over to your product.

WHICH KIND OF MEMBERSHIP SITE SHOULD YOU CREATE?

As mentioned earlier in this report, there are actually several different kinds of membership sites you can create. Some are difficult to create, others are quite simple. But how do you know which kind suits your site?

There are several ways to arrive at your decision. You can decide based on

- How much work you want to put in creating the site.
- Whether or not you want a simple format or one that has a lot of bells and whistles.
- How much time you plan on spending updating the site and providing content.
- Whether or not you want to create a community setting.
- Whether or not you want to outsource to set the site up or if you have the skills to do it yourself

That list is by no means complete but it can get you started as you think about what components you want on the site. Here is a short list of the types of membership sites out there.

- **Autoresponder based site**
Just collect the payments and the content gets sent to their email. This is the easiest to implement.
- **Regular website**
You can set up your membership site as if you would a regular

website. The only difference is that a login is required. These sites can have articles, a forum, a blog, etc. It will all depend on what is right for the niche.

If you give these points some thought based on the subject your membership site will be on, you'll be more successful.

ANALYSE THE COMPETITION

Before you truly get started in setting up your membership site, you'll need to analyse the competition. If you fail to do this, you may have difficulty getting people to sign up for your site. To start with, examine your direct competitors. These are the people who have a membership site in the same subject as yours.

To get started, you'll want to go out and find membership sites in your niche. If there aren't any, this could mean one of two things – there could be a need for your membership site *or* people in your niche aren't willing to spend money for a membership. Bear in mind that an effective marketer can get people to fork over the money for a membership so the second scenario may not even be an issue.

Assuming that there is at least one membership site pertaining to your niche, a good first step is to sign up for a membership. After that, observe the following things:

- How the site is designed. Is it easy to navigate?
- How much the membership cost and what their different pricing options are.
- If there is a community, do people readily participate?
- Determine if something is missing from the site that you feel the members need. This could be information, videos, a forum, a blog, etc. Be the one to provide it for them.
- Think really hard about what will set you apart from your competition.

When it comes to being different, you have several choices as to how you can go about doing that. Here is a list of ideas. Keep in mind that you can always build on these ideas. You can also choose one from the list or utilize a combination of these tactics.

- **Under-pricing**
Charge less than your competition. This will attract people who want the content but don't want to pay the prices.
- **Better quality**
Establish your site as something that is of a higher quality. You can do this by getting killer testimonials from people.
- **Modify your niche**
For example, if your niche is weight loss, you may want to modify it slightly to target an even smaller portion of the market. An example of a modified weight loss niche would be "weight loss for women".

Spend as much time on analysing your competition as you need because it will be time well spent. Your research can help you come up with an idea that will have an even greater profit potential.

If you gloss over this part thinking you don't need it, your site may not be as successful as you want it. Yes, it is possible to achieve success if you skip this step. But it may not be worth it to take that chance.

DECIDE ON A PRICING SCHEDULE

Another key decision you'll need to make is figuring out a pricing schedule for the site. Of course, you can choose to make it free but that should only be done for a specific purpose such as building your list or getting people interested in the full membership.

In general, you'll want to choose a price your future customers will want to pay for. Sometimes it's hard to gauge until you set a price and see what happens. If it's too low, people may suspect that the content is lacking. If it's too high, you may have a hard time getting people to sign up, depending on the niche.

Either way, choose a price that you think makes sense and then give it at least a month. If membership isn't quite what you expect, alter it accordingly.

There are also different things you can do in terms of when the customers get billed for the site. Here are the choices

- **One time fee**
On this kind of site, users pay only once. The membership could expire after a certain point which often happens with things like courses or if the content is limited.
- **Lifetime membership**
This is a variation of the one time fee. The difference is that the site membership will never expire and you'll have access as long as the site is running.
- **Charge them monthly**
This is probably the most common. A monthly membership fee also gives you a steady income to rely on each month provided you have a steady rate of memberships.
- **Yearly rate**
Some membership sites charge a yearly fee. This is a good idea if you aren't sure when you'll update the content or if the site is well established and easy to run.

Keep in mind that you can offer your customers a number of membership options. For example, some sites charge a monthly rate and also a yearly rate. If you do the math, the yearly rate is usually a better bargain if you can find the cash.

RUNNING THE NUMBERS – HOW MUCH CAN YOU REALLY MAKE?

Once you decide on a pricing schedule, the next step is to run the numbers. Figure out exactly how many sign ups you need to meet your financial goals. For example, if you know you want to charge \$19.95 a month and want to make around \$2000 dollars, you'll need to entice around 100 people to sign up. If you want to charge around \$10 a month, you'll need 200 people, etc.

In the beginning, it will be easier to keep track if you just choose one pricing structure and stick with it. So, choose a monthly pricing structure *or* a yearly one. Once your site is more established, you can be creative with the pricing.

GETTING PEOPLE TO SIGN UP

Once you have the site up and running and decide on a pricing schedule, your next task is to entice people to sign up. There are several ways you can do this and it is a good idea to try each of these methods to maximize your signup rate.

- **Sell to your list**
If you have a list, hopefully they are already accustomed to buying things from you. That's because the list is a very powerful thing when it comes to selling your own products.
- **Create a list**
If you don't have a list set up yet – work to create one. You can offer a free teaser membership to the site by having people sign up for the list. Or, you can give something else away such as an ebook in your niche.
- **Sales page**
You'll definitely need to create a sales page (also called a landing page) to direct traffic to. If the sales page is highly effective then all you need to do is direct more traffic to the page to get signups. To determine if it's effective, you'll need to test it.
- **Market the sales page**
This may seem obvious but once the sales page is up and running, you'll want to market it using any means you can think of. You can put a link for it on your blog or website, use social networking, do article marketing, create Hubpages, etc. Basically, employ any means you'd use to market a standard website.
- **Start an affiliate program**
This one is really fun. Once you get the affiliate program up and running, just start an affiliate program. That means that other people will promote your landing page to their lists and you'll reach a wider range of people. Granted, it will cut into your profits but this is an easy way to get people coming to your site.

This list of ways to get people to sign up for the site is by no means complete. If you can think of other methods, by all means use them. Especially since each niche may require a different tactic.

TIPS FOR MAKING THE MEMBERSHIP SITE EVEN MORE LUCRATIVE

In the previous section we talked about getting people to sign up for the member site. While this is an important step, it should not be done at the expense of running a great site. In other words, you want to make your customers happy. If you do, they'll keep coming back.

Having a successful site means that you will provide great content and also find ways to increase your earnings. Here are some ideas.

- **Promote affiliate programs**

Are there certain products or services that you use all the time and recommend in your site? If this is the case, there's nothing wrong with promoting the affiliate link. If customers trust that you won't just promote *anything* and respect your opinion, this will increase your sales.

- **Don't get overwhelmed**

This is as much a tip for making more money as it is a case for simplicity. Customers don't necessarily want a site that has a lot on it. They just want content that serves to teach them about the topic they are interested in. A membership site is a good way to boost your income. However, it won't be worth your energy if you make it too complicated. The easier it is to run, the better off you'll be.

- **Make them want more**

At the point when your site debuts, you'll want to have enough content on there to satisfy your new customers. However, you also shouldn't put all the content up there at first. Making them want more is a great way to give them a reason to come back which means they'll be willing to renew their membership.

- **Get feedback**

A great way to get your customers coming back for more is to have them give you feedback. This is an easy way to make sure all of their needs are being met as well. If you ask them their opinion and then implement their suggestions, they'll feel as if they are a valued customer.

- **Great customer service**

As with any business, providing your customers with excellent customer service is a big part of making your site successful. If you

have great content and your rates are more than affordable but you don't have excellent customer service, you may find that you don't convert the one time customers into constant, paying members. Answer people's emails. Try to help them solve their problems. If you don't have the time to take care of this yourself, at least hire someone who does. Starting a membership site is easy. However, to keep it running, you need to focus on things like customer service in order to make it successful.

- **Don't give up**

This may sound obvious but if you aren't seeing the results you want at first, don't give up. There may be a part of your strategy that needs honing, but giving up may not be the best option. Sometimes, membership sites can take a little while to get going. If you give up too quickly you may never see the success you want.

JUST TAKE THE PLUNGE!

Maybe you've been thinking about starting a membership site for a while but are waiting for the right time. At some point, it's time to stop thinking about it and just take action. Yes, it is true that you can make a considerable amount of money with a membership site. However, it's important to take action instead of wait. The sooner you get started, the less competition you have – especially if your niche is very popular.